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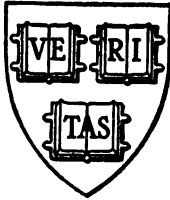
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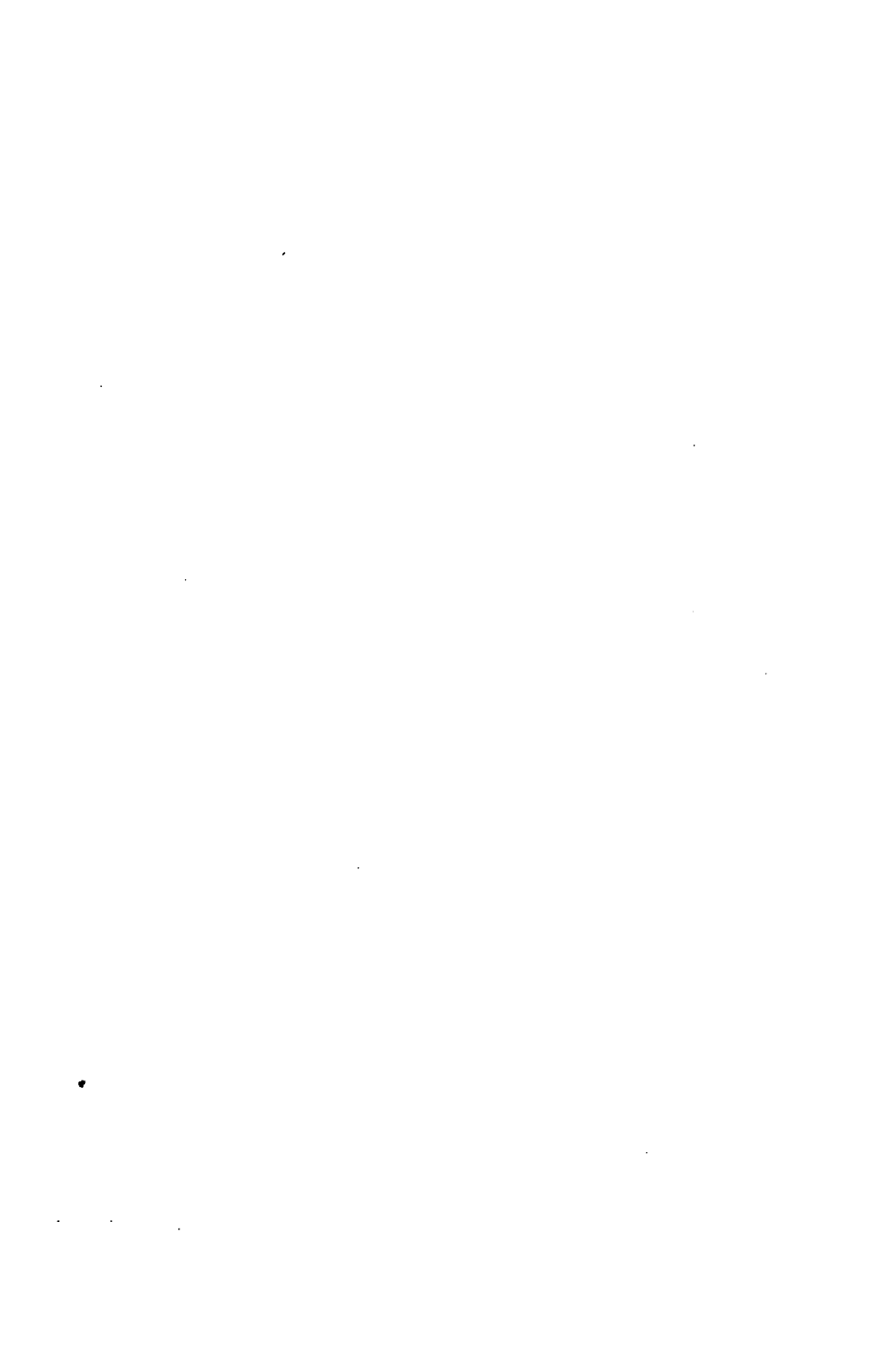
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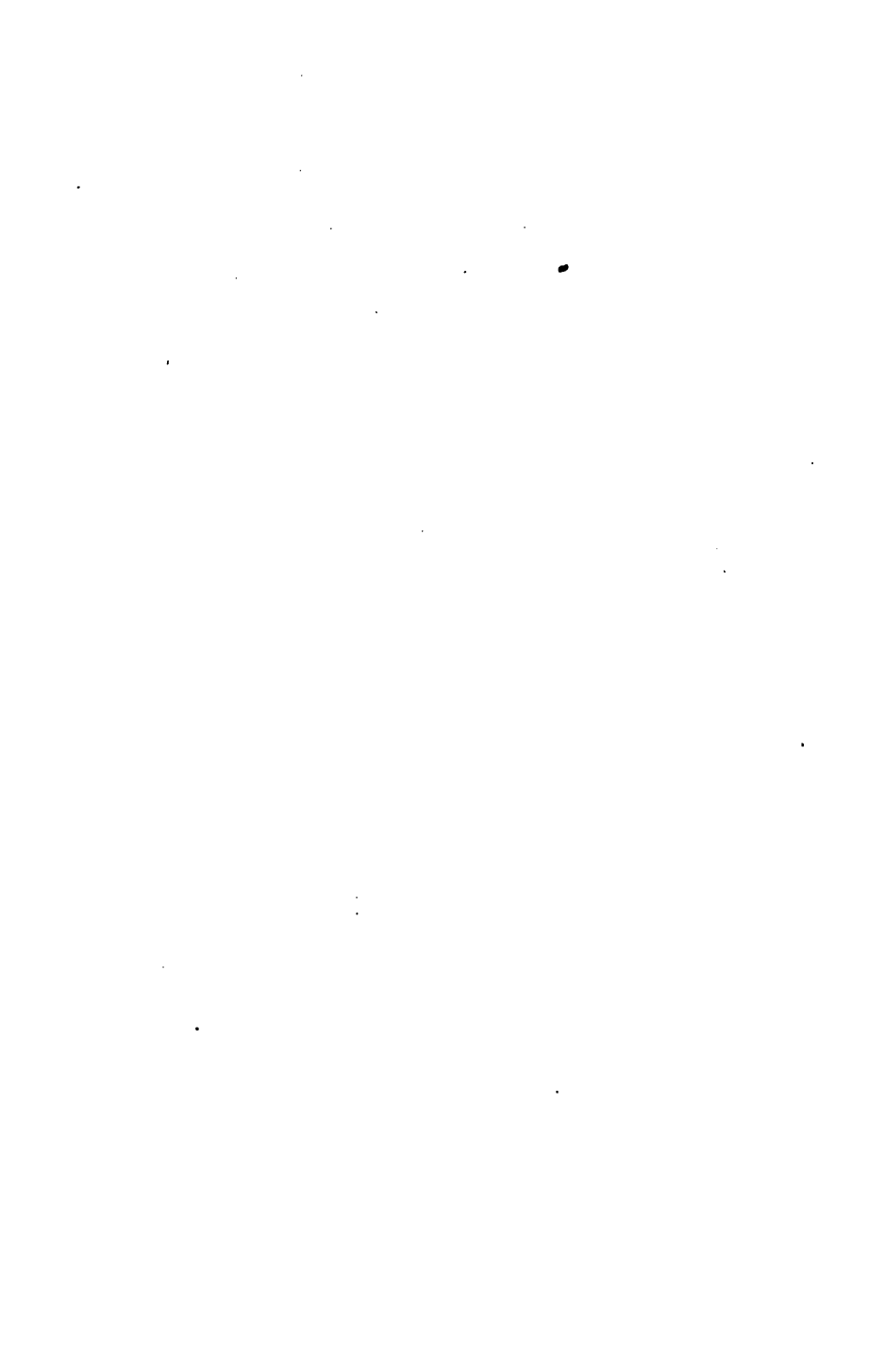
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Abdul-Hamid II as he is to-day.

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THE PRIVATE LIFE

OF THE

SULTAN OF TURKEY

BY GEORGES DORYS

SON OF THE LATE PRINCE OF SAMOS, ONE OF THE
SULTAN'S MINISTERS, EX-GOVERNOR OF CRETE, ETC.

TRANSLATED BY ARTHUR HORNBLow



Illustrated

NEW YORK
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
MDCCCII

Ott 540.4.6

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Walter B. Briggs

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A FOREWORD

It has remained for M. Georges Dorys, a young Greek, to present a new picture of the inner life of him whom Gladstone styled *The Great Assassin*, which, for frankness of description and boldness of criticism, has probably never been equalled.

Who is M. Dorys and what are his qualifications and authority for writing a work of this description are natural enough questions. The name Dorys is a pseudonym only. The author's father, the late Prince of Samos, was one of the Sultan's ministers, and at one time governor of Crete. His son, therefore, has mingled since his childhood with the

The Sultan of Turkey

extraordinary political world which ferments around Yildiz Palace, and he has had exceptional opportunities for obtaining Palace news at first hand. Much of the material used in this book was doubtless obtained from his father, since the son could not possibly have participated in some of the events described; but more recently M. Dorys had additional facilities of his own for acquiring information in his capacity as sub-correspondent of the London *Times*. When, however, M. Dorys became an active member of the Young Turk party—a liberal or revolutionary organization which demands a constitution for Turkey—he attracted to himself the unwelcome attentions of the Padishah, and was forced to flee from Constantinople and take refuge in Paris, where this book was written.

That M. Dorys loves the Sultan no one will believe after reading these pages,

A Foreword

but he assures us that he is not alone in this hatred of his country's ruler, but that thousands, millions—including the Sultan's own family—await impatiently the hour when they will be delivered. It is a terrible picture he draws. We see nothing here of the wise, enlightened ruler seeking to redeem Turkey from her position of European Sick Man whom other biographers have painstakingly striven to depict.

With a singularly graphic pen, M. Dorys lifts the veil on every phase of the daily existence led by the Padishah in his gilded palace, which is really a strong fortress built with a special view to protecting him against attack. He shows the Sultan living in constant fear of poison, and having cats and dogs, and even his staff, taste his food before he partakes of it. He pictures him as having a horror of darkness, and keeping

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Yildiz Park lighted all night in consequence; terrified by the stillness of night, and ordering armed guards to tramp ceaselessly up and down outside his bedroom window; in constant apprehension of attack, and ever ready to draw one of the three revolvers with which he is always armed on the most inoffensive persons; loving cheap literature, and gloating over stories of blood and violence; suspecting all around him, and exiling and putting to death every one against whom he has a real or imaginary grievance; and as in Turkey there is no appeal beyond Cæsar, his victims are rarely heard of again once they fall into his power. His early intrigues to gain the throne, his machinations against his unfortunate brother, still kept a prisoner by him—all this is related with a wealth of supporting evidence and in a manner that shows the greatest famili-

A Foreword

arity with the subject and does not fail to carry conviction with it. The chapter on the Imperial Harem probably furnishes the most accurate and complete account of the daily life led by the three hundred unhappy women shut up in the Seraglio that has ever been written.

One feels, when reading M. Dorys's pages, that he may be making the worst of the case. No man is so bad that there is no good in him somewhere. Yet no one who reads carefully the daily newspapers can help being struck by the startling corroboration recent cable despatches from Constantinople give to M. Dorys's statements. Only a short time ago a despatch stated that the Sultan, while having his teeth attended to, drew a revolver on the luckless dentist, who had happened to give him accidentally a little extra wrench, thinking the latter

The Sultan of Turkey

had designs on his life. Another more recent despatch reported that a mysterious conflagration had started in the Imperial Harem, and that 1,700 persons had been exiled on suspicion of being implicated in it. These incidents and many others of a similar nature, would seem to bear out many of the statements of M. Dorys, who thus drags the Sultan to the bar of public opinion and presents him in an altogether new and startling light.

As was to be foreseen, the Sultan has not looked with much favour on M. Dorys's book. The author himself being beyond his reach, Abdul-Hamid has appealed to the governments of the different countries where the book has appeared, and in Sweden prevailed upon the authorities not only to prohibit further sales of the work, but to raid the houses of suspected purchasers for copies.

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The Sultan also made a protest to M. Delcassé, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, against the sale of the book in France, but in face of the clamour made in the public press the government was powerless to act, even if it had wished to, which is doubtful.

Since making these protests the Sultan has condemned the author himself to death, and there is little doubt that the sentence would be carried out promptly had not M. Dorys anticipated the Imperial wrath and sought refuge in a foreign country.

The foregoing facts are merely presented here to give the reader a clue to the identity of the author and some idea of the general outlines of what, in many respects, is a remarkable book. My own part has been simply that of M. Dorys's English interpreter.

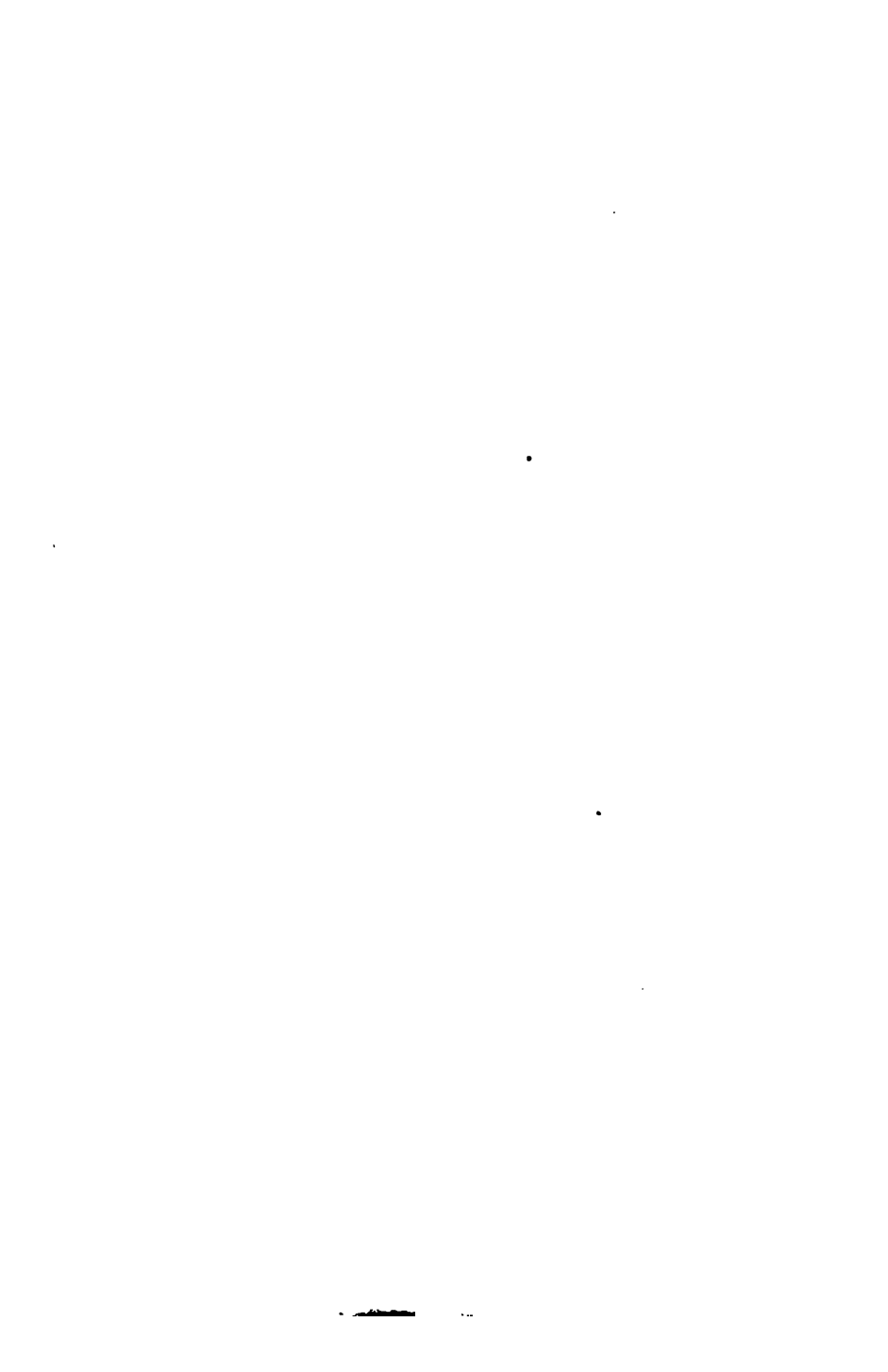
ARTHUR HORNBLow.

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PRIVATE LIFE OF THE SULTAN OF TURKEY

CHAPTER I

PRINCE ABDUL-HAMID

THE present Sultan, Abdul-Hamid II, younger brother of Sultan Mourad and nephew of Sultan Abdul-Aziz, is the second son of Sultan Abdul-Medjid. Grandson of Mahmoud and great-grandson of Abdul-Hamid I, he is the thirty-fourth Padishah of the Osman family and the twenty-eighth since the taking of Constantinople.

Abdul-Hamid was born September 22, 1842, and is the son, as already stated, of Abdul-Medjid, and a slave of Armenian origin, but converted to Is-

The Sultan of Turkey

lamism, who was a dancer in the household of Esme-Sultana, sister of that prince.

Several stories are current regarding the paternity of Abdul-Hamid. According to some his father was an *aivaz* * or Armenian cook in the palace of Abdul-Medjid; according to others, the present sovereign is the son of Garabet-Effendibalian, brother of the late Serkis Bey, the eminent architect of the Tcheragan Palace, who in this quality enjoyed the run of the Palace. These stories are doubtless apocryphal; if there is really Armenian blood in Abdul-Hamid's veins, it comes from his mother's side.

The Sultan, however, persists in denying this statement, and, repudiating all Armenian origin, declares that nothing hurts his feelings more cruelly than this

* The Kurdo-Armenian type of Abdul-Hamid has given some colour to this story.

Prince Abdul-Hamid

“insulting fable.” Moreover, he persecutes relentlessly all those who dare allude to his origin. Among other victims of this open secret are fourteen students of the military medical school. These young men wrote a song in which occurred frequently the name Bedros (which means Peter in the Armenian language), by which they irreverently designated the Sultan. The students were immediately arrested, exiled last March, and even their own families, in spite of constant researches, are ignorant as to what has become of them.

Since 1896 the Official Almanach of the Ottoman Empire appears with the fac-simile of Abdul-Hamid’s birth certificate reproduced on the front page. The Sultan hopes to destroy by this step another absurd story, according to which he is the son of an Armenian and a Circassian slave whom Sultan Abdul-Medjid,

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her husband, drowned after her confinement for committing adultery.

The mother of the present Sultan died in 1849 of pulmonary trouble at the age of twenty-six. The late Dr. Zographos, private physician of Abdul-Medjid, relates that when the latter prince, who was present at the death-bed, drew aside the sheet half covering the dying woman's head, her face, ravaged by disease and frightfully decomposed, presented a horrible spectacle. Abdul-Medjid also died of phthisis, at the age of thirty-nine, in 1861.

Abdul-Hamid came into the world, therefore, with the germs of the malady that carried off his father and mother, but so far he has succeeded in resisting them.

On the death of his mother the young prince, then in his eighth year, was given over to the care of the Hanoum Naavik-

Prince Abdul-Hamid

Missal, an old slave of the Imperial Harem; and at the death of the latter, which occurred shortly afterward, the fourth wife of Abdul-Medjid, Peresto-Hanoum, who had no child, was intrusted with the duty of acting as mother toward her master's second son. On his accession to the throne, Abdul-Aziz made a proposal of marriage to Peresto-Hanoum, a woman celebrated for her beauty. But she declined this honour in order to be better able to devote herself to the bringing up of Prince Hamid and his sister Djemilé-Sultana.

Peresto-Hanoum is still living, and bears the title of Validé-Sultana (Sultana-Mother). This woman, who is highly respected in the Seraglio, has always shown her adopted son great affection, which he has too often repaid with ingratitude.

The Sultan is reproached with having

The Sultan of Turkey

been more than once disrespectful to the Validé. Shortly before the deposition of Mourad, one day that she ventured to remonstrate with Prince Abdul-Hamid regarding the criminal magical practices in which he was engaged in the hope of mounting the throne, she received from him an insolent reply which she considered a mortal affront. Another time Prince Abdul-Hamid complained to Abdul-Aziz that his foster-mother was maintaining improper relations with a former servant of the palace, Osman Bey. The latter was immediately dismissed, although since then he has been promoted to the rank of first chamberlain by the present Sultan.

Learning of the calumny of which she had been the object, Peresto-Hanoum protested indignantly, and declared to Abdul-Aziz that she would no longer live under the same roof as her adopted son.

Prince Abdul-Hamid

Later a reconciliation was brought about. But the Hanoum, while consenting to live in the Sultan's Harem, took pains to show that she did not consider it her real home. That is why she has always insisted on having her own private residence at Nichan-Tach.

Abdul-Hamid continued none the less to express himself very disrespectfully regarding the venerable Hanoum. For instance, one day he remarked to several favourites that two of the Validé's relatives — Izzet Pasha and Haïri Pasha — were not her nephews, as she claimed, but that she had invented this relationship in order to provide a respectable excuse for her intimacy with one of them.

Abdul-Hamid's infancy was spent, like that of the other princes, in the Harem, among slaves, eunuchs, and *lalas* (head servants). Sickly, lonely, and taci-

The Sultan of Turkey

turn, he differed from his brothers and sisters in character, tastes, and habits. "He was," said M. Vambéry, the celebrated orientalist, who knew him when a child, "a pale, silent, melancholy boy, and his face had a distrustful and cunning expression."

The youthful misanthrope avoided his brothers' society and took no part in their games. Most of the time standing aloof in some dark corner, he would watch them laugh and play with a fixed stare and with an expression in his eyes of infinite sadness except when fear or malice lit them up with a fugitive flame. One day that two of the young princes, Rechad and Kemaleddin, had grown weary of running about in the garden with Princess Senieh, the children went to the reception room, and ended by falling asleep on the divans where they were resting. Their brother Hamid, after

Prince Abdul-Hamid

making sure they were fast asleep, went softly up to them, removed all the little gewgaws which they were wearing in oriental fashion, and then glided away, like a thieving magpie, and carefully hid his booty.

This incident gives an insight into Abdul-Hamid's early character. On the other hand, he showed great antipathy for study and all intellectual work. His tutor, Kemal Pasha, his masters, among whom were Omer-Effendi and Cherif-Effendi, his French professors, who were successively Edhem Pasha, Namyk Pasha, and M. Gardet, complained of their pupil unceasingly. Studious and diligent as was his elder brother Mourad, so Abdul-Hamid displayed little aptitude for books. As is well known, he is to-day practically uneducated and ignorant even of his own tongue; and, although he has tried several times to improve it, he

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has never been able to restrain the excessive independence of his orthography.

Sly and vindictive, there was little about him as a boy to like; and his father, Abdul-Medjid,* never spoke of him but with indifference or contempt.

One evening that the Sultan was at table with his sons he noticed Abdul-Hamid, at the end of the meal, carry off the last slice of watermelon that remained in the fruit dish. Saying nothing to the young prince, as if he deemed the task of reformation beyond him, Abdul-Medjid remarked to Mihran-Bey-Duz, a prominent Armenian, who, by favour, had been present, standing, at the Imperial dinner: "I feel no uneasiness about my

* As a popular story goes, Abdul-Medjid was in his bath when the news of Abdul-Hamid's birth was brought to him and he had nothing on him withal to make the messenger the customary present. The Sultan is reported to have predicted then that the child would mount the throne, and that his rule would be fatal to Turkey.

Prince Abdul-Hamid

other children, but I'm afraid I can do nothing with him."

Another day, speaking to Deli-Bogos, uncle of the said Mihran-Bey-Duz, he complained that his son Hamid showed a great fondness for intrigue; on this, Deli-Bogos, trying to defend the young prince, ventured to reproach the Sultan gently for the coldness he showed him while he loved his other children with evident partiality. "I am tired of that boy," replied the sovereign; "I tell you he is a born intriguer." And he added: "*Yuz veriled-jek mahluk deyildir,*" an untranslatable phrase very suggestive in Turkish, and the approximate sense of which is: "He is not a man you can give too much rein."

His young brothers, too, had no great love for Hamid; Mourad alone, good-hearted and generous, worthy son of his father, showed him neither hatred nor

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contempt, and urged the little princes to treat him in more brotherly fashion.

Loving no one, and feeling himself loved by no one, the pale and sickly child became each day more suspicious and morose, and all the evil there was in his soul developed rapidly in his gloomy solitude, as fermentation is favoured by darkness.

Yet he met one being for whom he felt some sympathy. This was the Validé-Sultana of Abdul-Aziz, named Pertevalé-Kadine, a fanatical old woman, superstitious, ambitious, and a crafty intriguer, who at once pleased the young prince, whose uneasy imagination inclined as much toward superstition as his mind rebelled against exact science, and who showed himself, like this woman, a fierce enemy of Christians, whom his father and his brother Mourad, both most liberal-

Prince Abdul-Hamid

minded men, liked, on the contrary, to have around them.

From that time on a new existence began for the young prince. The old Pertevale, during the long evenings he passed with her, surrounded by sorcerers and soothsayers, initiated him into the mysteries of magic and astrology, obsolete sciences now almost universally abandoned, but which are still practised in the Orient, where they were born, and both old enemies of Religion, which modern incredulity is now beginning to study with astonishment.

Many astrologers or necromancers predicted that young Hamid would mount the throne of the Padishas and enjoy a long reign, and their prophecies, all agreeing strangely enough, developed his budding ambition with fantastic rapidity.

And in time, little by little, the pre-

The Sultan of Turkey

dictions came true. It was as if chance seemed bent on strengthening in this tormented soul the most puerile superstition. During the reign of Abdul-Aziz, among the personalities of the preceding régime who were, on his accession, relegated to the provinces, was an acquaintance of Prince Abdul-Hamid, named Nedjib Pasha, who had been exiled to Cyprus. Fortunately the latter met there a friend, a sheik named Abdurrahman-Essin, a native of Sidon, a simple, honest man, who being on good terms with the governor of the island, begged the latter to mitigate the hardships of exile in his friend's case; this sheik predicted to Nedjib Pasha that his misfortunes would soon end, and that he would be called to high functions. It was not long before some powerful influence was used, and the Imperial yacht Izeddin went to bring back the exile, restored to favour.

Prince Abdul-Hamid

Nedjib, grateful toward the sheik, whose prophecy was beginning to be realized, recommended him to the young Abdul-Hamid, whose superstitious nature he knew, boasting to him of his sooth-sayer's infallibility. The prince, who soon struck up a friendship with his old friend's *protégé*, often invited him to leave his tekke * at Sidon to go and spend a few days with him. They discussed theology together, or read and commented upon passages from the Koran, and the young Hamid was sometimes moved to tears by the old man's gentle and harmonious voice.

· One day Abdurrahman-Essin said to him: "O Prince, *inchallah!* † you will soon be Sultan!" The young man remarked that Abdul-Aziz being in the prime of life, and the heir-apparent, Mourad, being young and well, the prediction had

* Convent.

† If it please Allah!

The Sultan of Turkey

slight chance of being soon realized. But the old sage persisted, adding that an intuition in which he had unshakable faith dictated his words.

In fact, less than two years later Mourad mounted the throne, soon to make place for his brother Hamid, who, not forgetful of the sheik prophet, summoned him to Constantinople, where he died only a few years ago. For a long time he was all-powerful, and was regarded as a saint. The Sultan only separated from him when, having conceived the plan, as grandiose as it was puerile, of a pan-Islamic crusade, Abdurrahman-Essin was sent, with other sheiks, to preach in the Holy Land of Islam.

Unfortunately for the memory of the holy man, it is still remembered that he accepted a dark mission. It was he who took to Osman Nouri Pasha, governor of Hedjaz—nicknamed by the Arabs “Ab-

Prince Abdul-Hamid

dul-Hamid's Executioner"—the secret order to put to death the unfortunate Midhat and Damad-Mahmoud Pashas.

Abdul-Hamid did not study the black art with this fervour solely because it predicted he would mount the throne, but because it was to aid him to accomplish that object.

A confirmed adept in magic and the black arts, this prince, who was either very much behind or a little ahead of his time, cast magic spells more than five centuries after Charles de Valois and twenty years before M. de Rochas, whose experiments with mental suggestion recently have stupefied the scientific world. Later, in fact, he is said to have had made by a soothsayer—toward the end of Mourad's reign—a wax doll representing his brother, the young Sultan, and which he himself, now heir-presumptive, pricked with the traditional pins; then he gave

The Sultan of Turkey

the doll back to the sorcerer, to be put in the cellar of his hovel at Stamboul, a wretched place possessing, it appears, particularly unhealthy properties. And there, in the dark, the black magician, seated on the Koran, made funereal incantations and invoked the evil spirits by striking Mourad's effigy with a branch of a thorny rose tree, in order to hasten the fall of the young monarch by accelerating the progress of his malady. Hamid also had made by an Armenian tailor named Djumboussian a coat which mysterious rites endowed, in his eyes, with harmful properties; then, it is said, he made a present of the coat to his brother.

Soon afterward chance had it that the throne became vacant, and the princely occultist mounted it.

Prince Abdul-Hamid having gained the friendship of the Validé-Sultana, the

Prince Abdul-Hamid

latter used in favour of her young friend the influence she had with her son, the Sultan. Abdul-Aziz, noticing with disapproval the growing popularity of Mourad, prince-apparent, ended by becoming more partial to Abdul-Hamid, who strove by every means to curry favour, and, for instance — this is common knowledge — played the spy for his uncle without having been intrusted with this duty.

In his residence at Machlak, as in his kiosk at Kiathane or in his villa at Therapia,* Prince Hamid received all kinds of people, who informed him of the doings and sayings of this one and that one — reports which he, on his part, hastened to repeat to the Sultan. So much so that his brothers, who had remarked it, became distrustful of him.

Mourad, the prince - apparent, was

* On the site where this villa formerly stood has been erected since the summer residence of the German ambassador.

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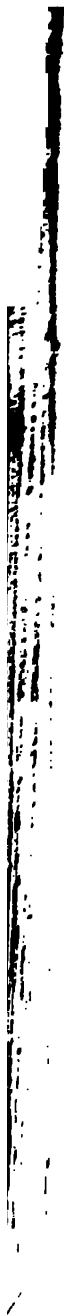
very fond of keeping up close relations with the ministers and notable personages of the day, some of whom were even received at his house, but always as quietly as possible, for Abdul-Aziz, jealous of the favourable impression his future successor, sympathetic, enlightened, and liberal, made on all whom he met, had him carefully spied upon. One day that Akef Pasha, Minister of Justice, was thus visiting Mourad, who appreciated his intelligence and moral value, Moustapha-Effendi, the prince's confidential man, entered hurriedly and announced the visit of his brother Hamid. Mourad was visibly disturbed, and begged his guest to withdraw into an adjoining room. "For," he said, "my brother Abdul-Hamid is coming!" This indicated sufficiently the danger they ran in being discovered by him in *tête-à-tête*. The minister was concealed, therefore, during all



Abdul-Medjid, the Sultan's father.



Abdul-Aziz, the Sultan's uncle.



Prince Abdul-Hamid

the time of Abdul-Hamid's visit, and it was only after the intruder's departure that the heir-apparent's guest returned to the reception room.

It was by such services and by a modest attitude and circumspect and quiet life that Abdul-Hamid tried to please his uncle, never letting an opportunity slip to advance himself in his favour.

At the time of the Sultan Abdul-Aziz's visit to Paris, in 1867, when he was accompanied by the princes, his nephew Mourad at the dinners and receptions of the Tuileries spoke with everybody in French, while his uncle, the Padishah, a very ignorant man, was obliged to have recourse to an interpreter. Abdul-Hamid, who at that time spoke even better French than he does to-day, pretended to be entirely ignorant of the language—a skilful bit of flattery calculated to increase still further the uneasiness which

The Sultan of Turkey

the heir-apparent's superior education caused the Sultan.

The attitude of the two princes presented so striking a contrast and was such a complete revelation of their respective characters that Napoleon III was much struck by it; charmed by the affable manners and high qualities of Mourad-Effendi, he could not resist saying to Fuad Pasha: "What a difference between the two brothers!" It is said that Abdul-Hamid later heard of this remark, and ever after nourished a violent resentment against the Emperor of the French.

However, in spite of all his efforts, the relations that he maintained with his uncle, the Padishah, were not marked on either side by sincere affection nor cordial sympathy. In fact, on the eve of his uncle's deposition, the prince ceased being devoted to him, and, taking good care

Prince Abdul-Hamid

not to draw his attention to the events that were preparing, intrigued, on the contrary, to hasten his fall, which would advance him nearer the throne by making him heir-presumptive. On the other hand, Abdul-Aziz did not esteem his nephew enough to be able to love him. One day that the young prince wanted money he went down on his knees before his uncle, in the garden of the Palace, begging him to give him the amount he needed. The Sultan ordered the sum to be given him, but expressed himself with severity on the indignity of his conduct.*

The love of money is a characteristic trait in Abdul-Hamid, and was noticeable ever since he was a child. He was always very methodical in his disbursements, had no debts like the other princes, kept his own accounts, and examined minutely all that concerned the management of his

* The prince's monthly income was about £800, or \$4,000.

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property, the investment of his money, and the revenue from his estates, the produce from which, vegetables, fruits, milk, etc., were sold in the city markets.

The prince also speculated on the Galata Bourse, but he only tempted Fortune timidly, venturing upon prudent speculations which turned out fairly well, thanks to the accuracy of "tips" given him, and the cleverness of his broker, a man named Assani, of questionable reputation, who collected debts for a livelihood, and who, after the accession of his august client, became an important personage, so much so that he was invited to the gala dinners at Yildiz, until one day it resulted in a little diplomatic scandal, the ambassador of a great foreign power severely criticising the presence of this individual * at the Imperial dinner.

* A bit of history doubtless unknown to many is the rôle Assani played in the Egyptian question. When England invited the Sultan in 1880 to participate in re-establishing

Prince Abdul-Hamid

The love for money had already developed avarice in the young prince, a propensity that has since grown in him, for, in spite of the liberality of which he is capable when his personal safety is at stake, Abdul-Hamid can be excessively mean. One day the prince scolded roundly his intendant, a man named Moussa, for having ventured to take some eggs from the poultry yard for his brother's harem; he discharged an old servant because of the disappearance of some hens; and he whipped his *yaourtchi* (vender of curdled cream) for an error of four cents which the poor devil had made to his august customer's prejudice.

Mourad was aware of this fault in his brother, and often teased him with it. Was it by chance, or with malicious in-

order in Egypt, Abdul-Hamid consulted, among other personages, the said Assani as to whether Turkey should accept the offer of the British cabinet. Assani was strongly opposed to it.

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tention, that the heir-apparent engaged a popular writer, the Greek Kassapi, director of the satirical journal *Hayal*, to translate into Turkish Molière's "L'Avare," and to adapt it for the Turkish stage? Anyhow, Kassapi, who only saw in Mourad's request a praiseworthy desire to give the Ottoman public an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the French masterpiece, immediately set to work, and, having finished his translation, gave it the Turkish title of "Pinti-Hamid," signifying "Hamid the Stingy." For a number of years the miser in Turkey had been popularly called Pinti-Hamid, which in that country is the equivalent of other imaginary persons called in France *Harpagon*, or more recently, *Baron Rapineau*.

But Prince Abdul-Hamid saw in this unpleasant homonymy a personal criticism, and, exceedingly annoyed, repeat-

Prince Abdul-Hamid

edly begged Kassapi, who every day in his journal announced the forthcoming production of "Pinti-Hamid" at the Théâtre de Stamboul, not to go on with it.

Kassapi refused to accede to this request, declaring that he had not the slightest intention of offending the prince by any allusion which, moreover, did not exist. The piece was performed, and it goes without saying that Abdul-Hamid was not present at the *première*, but he bore the translator a violent grudge, and revenged himself later, when he was on the throne, by numberless petty persecutions.

Although very fond of women's society, Prince Abdul-Hamid from the time of his adolescence led a well-ordered life, differing in this from most of his brothers. He has had a few love affairs outside

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his harem, as, for instance, with the Belgian *modiste*, Mlle. Flora Cordier, who, tempted by the prince's offer to make her his legitimate wife, became converted to Islamism and took the name of Fatma, but was ultimately forgotten by him; another time he carried off a girl from the Seraglio of Abdul-Aziz, and immediately went through the form of marriage with her in order to prevent his uncle interfering. But these are almost all his sentimental adventures.

About 1870, however, the prince, who was then in his twenty-eighth year, allowed himself to go to excesses which affected his delicate health, and which nearly brought about the terrible malady the germs of which he inherited through both parents. But Mavroyeni Pasha, his private physician and personal friend, succeeded by dint of persuasion in making his master change his man-

Prince Abdul-Hamid

ner of living, and in 1872, having triumphed over his passions, Prince Abdul-Hamid resumed his usual mode of existence — steady, prudent, and irreproachable.

CHAPTER II

ACCESSION TO THE THRONE

THE *coup d'état* of May 30, 1876, which deposed Abdul-Aziz and put his nephew on the throne under the title of Mourad V, was greeted by the people with cries of joy and enthusiastic acclamations. The country felt emancipated, and Musulman and Christian Turkey saw in this arrival in power of the popular and liberal prince, already styled "Mourad the Reformer," a promise of its coming regeneration.

In Europe the accession of the new Sultan made a most favourable impression, and the representatives of the Powers at Constantinople all hastened to show friendliness to Mourad.

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Russia alone manifested displeasure, for she had lost in the person of Abdul-Aziz the blindly docile instrument of her influence, which had weighed so heavily on the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, Mourad's liberal tendencies and his desire to save Turkey could not fail to alarm her powerful neighbour on the north. General Ignatieff, checkmated by the course of events, believed the game lost to Russia, and scarcely concealed the vexation caused him by the victory of the Turkish liberal party, supported by Sir Henry Elliot, the British ambassador.

But the enemies of Turkey did not despair long, for the first symptoms of the cerebral disorder which was to deprive the young sovereign of his reason appeared immediately after the dramatic and stirring events accompanying the dethronement of Abdul-Aziz.

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An unfortunate combination of circumstances and Russia's lucky star led the declared adversary of that Empire, the great patriot and ex-minister, Midhat Pasha, to serve at that time the cause of the enemy when the eminent statesman only wished to be the saviour of his country. It was Midhat, in fact, who conceived the project of bringing about a provisionary abdication by Mourad, rendered necessary owing to the state of the young monarch's health, and he gave more and more thought to it as the condition of the Sultan grew worse, owing to the dramatic events that followed one another incessantly.

That was Midhat's great political blunder, and for which he bitterly reproached himself later. He should have let the law take its course, and first allowed a year to go by, the time fixed in

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the case of a Sultan's illness making him unable to reign.*

But the times were very grave, and Midhat Pasha, fearing complications, had already made overtures to the principal leaders in the *coup d'état* of May 30th—Ruchdi Pasha, Grand Vizier, Haïroullah Effendi, Sheik-ul-Islam, and Hussein-Arni Pasha, Minister for War—a few days before the assassination of the last named by the fanatic Tcherkess-Hassan, which event occurred on June 15th.

Then it was that alarming rumours began to circulate regarding the interior security of the country. A certain number of Old Turks protested, in fact, against the liberal character of the reforms planned by Midhat and his party,

* This opinion was held later by the *Fetfa-Emini* Kara-Halil-Effendi at a council held on the eve of Mourad's dethronement, and at which were present Midhat, the Grand Vizier Ruchdi, the Sheik-ul-Islam Haïroullah, Abdi Pasha, Selfeddin-Effendi and other prominent ulémas. The opinion, however, was not generally shared.

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and added fresh embarrassment to an already difficult situation. However, amid all these political feelers and the party struggles as to the nature of the reforms to be introduced, Midhat's project seemed likely to triumph, thanks to the personal popularity of its author and to his progressive ideas, which constituted potent factors of success at a time when a wind of liberalism was blowing over the entire country.

Midhat's project proposed, as principal reforms, absolute equality of Mussulmans and Christians, the admission of the latter to all the dignities and offices of the state, the abolition of part of the *Chèri'i*,* the establishment of a Parliament, ministerial responsibility, the elaboration of a civil code modelled upon that of Napoleon, etc. This project—supported by Sultan Mourad himself, who,

* Sacred law.

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despite the poor state of his health, busied himself actively with public affairs, and particularly with the question of reforms—after having been discussed by the ministers and examined by the commentators of the *Chèri'i*, was presented by Midhat himself before the Grand General Council assembled at the Sheik-ul-Islamate, and at which took part the ministers and the grand ulémas,* who deliberated together. The project was adopted, and Prince Abdul-Hamid, heir-presumptive under the new reign as eldest of the princes of the Imperial family, promised Midhat its faithful execution during the interviews they had together in view of succeeding to Mourad—a provisional succession in the intention of the minister, but definitive in the mind of the prince. The projects served, in fact, as the basis for the famous constitution

* Doctors in theology, and commentators on sacred law.

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which was elaborated shortly afterward.

But, meantime, the sovereign's condition grew worse from day to day. The ceremony of his investiture was always put off by the ministers under divers pretexts. The domestic situation grew more serious daily in the capital, alarming uprisings were disturbing the provinces, and in the Balkans raged the mighty political tempest that carried on its wings the germs of the Russo-Turkish war.

However, the secret interviews between Midhat Pasha and Prince Abdul-Hamid were continued and increased in frequency. The prince professed the greatest liberalism and promised Midhat to grant him everything when he reached the throne.

Although these negotiations were not known, there was something in the air

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which presaged that a great event was preparing. On the advice of the heir-presumptive, the ministerial council issued, through the newspapers, a proclamation to the public exhorting it to be calm, urging it to avoid political discussions, to be patient during the grave crisis through which the Empire was about to pass in its struggle with the Servians and the Slavs of the Balkans, until the day when, all danger being past, they could at last set to work and carry out the reforms promised. Severe measures were taken in view of preventing political meetings and discussions, and secret agents were instructed to denounce recalcitrants. On the one hand, the press bureau prohibited the publication of all articles regarding domestic policy; and silence was imposed on every one in general. Here can be seen the hand of Abdul-Hamid and the growing influence of the future tyrant.

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While they were thus preparing the dethronement of Sultan Mourad the deplorable state of the latter's health became worse hourly, and with fearful rapidity. His highly nervous temperament and unhealthy sensitiveness had been painfully excited by the unjust suspicions which his uncle Abdul-Aziz, prompted by Prince Hamid, had entertained, and by the seclusion to which that Sultan had condemned him so unjustly, especially after the famous demonstration of the *softas* * against the Mahmoud-Nedim cabinet.

For the moral tortures which his uncle Aziz had thus created Mourad sought relief in drink, for which he had, moreover, an unfortunate tendency, and the excesses into which this passion led him increased the disorder he was already suffering from. The violent emotions of the

* Theological students.

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night which preceded his accession, the terrible shock he felt on reading the touching letter which his uncle wrote him the day following his dethronement, Abdul-Aziz's tragic suicide, the fixed idea that he might be reproached with having assassinated his uncle, and the rapid succession of so many other painful events, such as the murder of Hussein-Avni, ended by causing in his brain, exhausted as it was by the excessive mental strain he had been under since his arrival in power, a profound perturbation that soon destroyed all hope of saving his reason.

Prince Abdul-Hamid, so envious of the throne, followed the progress of the malady with great anxiety, in which brotherly concern did not enter in the least, and there is little doubt that he secretly rejoiced at it. He is even believed to have practised magic in the hope of hastening its progress. But here arises an histor-

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ical question which is still to-day, and perhaps will always remain a cruel enigma. According to the statements of persons worthy of credence who lived at that time at the Palace, the heir-presumptive, after making sure of the complicity of the persons in the service of his brother the Sultan, employed other unlawful means, having no connection with magic, to make the invalid's condition worse. We affirm nothing, leaving the responsibility of these assertions to those who have accused Abdul-Hamid.

In this relation, it has been said that the prince won over Dr. Capoleone, the Sultan's private physician, and persuaded him to treat his imperial patient so as to precipitate a catastrophe.

This, however, is an odious calumny on the part of persons who had reasons to dislike the physician. Capoleone was very devoted to Mourad, and it is incon-

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testable that he had little love for Hamid, of whom he said: "If he ever comes to the throne he will be a little Nero." What is certain is that the treatment to which the unfortunate Mourad was subjected was absurd, that, through mere professional pride, Capoleone energetically opposed an examination of his illustrious patient by any of his colleagues, and that he was exceedingly displeased because the Validé-Sultana summoned from Vienna the celebrated Professor Leidesdorff, who, moreover, disapproved of the treatment prescribed by Capoleone and expressed his opinion that a cure was possible.

However, shortly afterward, Leidesdorff left Constantinople suddenly, and in a second report, differing too much from the first not to cause its sincerity to be regarded with some suspicion, gave his opinion that the illness of Mourad V was

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incurable and that he was hopelessly condemned to insanity—an audacious assertion which was soon proved false in a striking manner, for Mourad, a few weeks later, recovered his health and complete lucidity of mind during his captivity in the Tcheragan Palace.

While these events, which were certainly surrounded by much mystery, were taking place, the Grand Vizier Ruchdi,* the Sheik-ul-Islam Hairoullah, and Midhat Pasha, believing they were acting in the interest of the country and warmly encouraged by the Seraskier Redif Pasha, a man blindly devoted to Abdul-Hamid, decided to offer the regency to the latter.

“One could have taken the heir-presumptive for a saint,” said Midhat Pasha a few months later to one of his friends,

* At first, however, Ruchdi was opposed to the candidature of Abdul-Hamid—although heir-presumptive—and put forward the name of Mourad’s second brother, Prince Kemaleddin-Effendi. He was converted later by Midhat.

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“he looked so delicate and modest, and spoke of his brother with so much pity and concern, and seemed so ready to sacrifice himself for the good of the country.”

His ambition betrayed itself, however, when the minister spoke formally of a regency. Abdul-Hamid then protested. *Aut Cæsar aut nihil!* He wanted the throne purely and simply, and in exchange granted everything: liberal programme, constitution, and the rest. The ministers, under the pressure of circumstances, too far advanced, moreover, to draw back, and judging that there was no longer time to hesitate, gave him, therefore, the Caliphate so greatly coveted.

However, on account of the difficulties raised at the last moment by some ulémas who accused the ministers of not respecting the *Chèr'i* law—fixing at one year

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the delay accorded every Sultan stricken with intellectual incapacity—Midhat compelled the heir-presumptive, shortly before his proclamation, to give him a promise in writing that he would restore the throne to his brother as soon as the latter was cured.

How illusory this promise has proved is well known. Later, after Midhat was exiled, the pasha's residence, by some extraordinary accident, was destroyed by fire. It was, perhaps, thought that the precious document was in it. But Midhat had taken care to carry it away with him, and put it in a safe place in London.

During the evening of August 30th, Prince Abdul-Hamid, leaving his villa at Machlak, went to his foster-mother, Peresto-Hanoum. The Sheik-ul-Islam had already prepared the *fetfa* of deposition, while the Grand Vizier addressed to the



Galata Bridge, Constantinople.



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ministers and high functionaries the invitations to the celebration of the *B'at* (ceremony of the proclamation of a new Sultan), which was to take place the next day, Thursday, at ten o'clock, in the Top-Capou Palace, at Stamboul. During the night of Wednesday the Dolma-Bagtché Palace, where Mourad lived, was surrounded by troops.

On Thursday morning, August 31st, very early, the heir-presumptive left the house of his foster-mother and got into a carriage, accompanied by the Seraskier Redif Pasha, and was followed by two other carriages, in which were seated the persons of his suite, the whole party being escorted by a hundred and fifty mounted guards.

The procession reached Taxim, followed the Grande Rue of Pera, the governor of which, Mehemmed Pasha, placed himself at the head of the escort, and by

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the Petits-Champs and the Karakeui Bridge arrived at Stamboul in time to be at 8.30 A. M. at the Top-Capou Palace, where were already assembled the ministers and high dignitaries of State.

At ten o'clock a salute of a hundred and one guns announced to the population that there had just been read the *fetfa* deposing Sultan Mourad and summoning to succeed him Abdul-Hamid-Effendi. The *B'at* ceremony was only ended by that of kissing hands at three o'clock in the afternoon, after which the new Padishah embarked at the Pointe du Sérail, whence, followed by a flotilla of Court barges, he proceeded to the Dolma-Bagtché Palace, which Mourad and his family had just left—having been transferred to Tcheragan Palace—and the doors of which were rigorously closed from that moment to every one who was not sent by Abdul-Hamid.

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The persons in the service of the ex-Sultan were immediately arrested, and, later, some were exiled and the others imprisoned. Prince Selaheddin, Mourad's son, was taken from the Military School where his father had placed him; all communications between Tcheragan Palace and the outside were cut off; an army of Abdul-Hamid's spies and eunuchs entered the service of the august captive and peopled his harem. Moreover, a medical board, presided over by Mavroyeni Pasha, head physician to the new sovereign, was instructed to examine the ex-Sultan's condition; and, although the latter refused to submit to any examination, made, nevertheless, an unfavourable report on the chances of the Imperial patient's recovery. Since then, although Mourad regained all his faculties, he remained a prisoner, and the surveillance over him even increased in strictness in measure

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that he made progress toward recovery.*

Abdul-Hamid's accession took place amid general indifference, which presented a striking contrast with the manifestations of joy that had greeted, three

* It is impossible, at the present time, to state what is the actual mental condition of this unfortunate prince. Well-informed persons claim to know, however, that twenty-five years of captivity and the horrible life he has led, have had of late a disastrous effect on his health, and that the victim is now really done for! What is most surprising is that Mourad has been able to survive so much misfortune, and so many insults, and humiliating persecution. Let us mention here a few instances of the treatment to which he has been subjected.

Shortly after his deposition a committee, composed of a few pashas, was instructed to ascertain how Mourad had managed, during his short reign, the fortune left him by Abdul-Aziz. A pamphlet written about that time by one Ahmed-Midhat-Effendi, an agent of the Sultan, accused Mourad and his mother of having stolen jewels and money belonging to the Treasury.

By abominable machinations they also tried to show that Mourad was in league with General Ignatieff to betray his country!

After the mad heroism of Ali-Souavi, who tried fruitlessly to liberate him, the unfortunate prince was transferred to Yildiz and questioned. The council of ministers, with Sadyk Pasha as Grand Vizier, then discussed a proposition said to have been proposed from Abdul-Hamid,

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months earlier, the arrival on the throne of Sultan Mourad. The new Padishah was unknown by the general public and could not, therefore, be very popular. Moreover, he was greeted with all the more coldness that he was called to succeed a sovereign whom the nation loved and who had just been torn so cruelly from its enthusiastic affection.

suggesting putting to death his unfortunate brother Mourad, under the pretext that the *Chèri'i* does not permit two Sultans to exist at the same time. This inhuman proposition, referred to a committee of ulémas, was rejected only owing to the courageous attitude of the *Fetfa-Emini* Nouri-Effendi and the Uléma Sahib-Effendi.

The humiliations to which Mourad is subjected do not spare even his paternal affection. Last year Abdul-Hamid wanted to betroth the eldest daughter of his captive brother, Princess Hadidje, who has remained until now with her unhappy father, to Tahir Bey, the too-famous director of the *Servet*, a scandalous sheet; but this plan provoked the indignation of Mourad, who from his prison wrote so violent a letter to his Imperial brother that all idea of the marriage had to be abandoned.

No one pronounces any more in the Padishah's dominions the name of the unfortunate son of Abdul-Medjid. The current histories of Turkey do not mention Mourad V, and his name has been effaced from the official list of the Ottoman Sultans.

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The ceremony of *Kylydj-Alai* (investiture) of the new Sultan, Abdul-Hamid II, took place on September 7th, with great pomp and amid a vast concourse of spectators. From early morning almost all the population of the capital was on foot, and in the streets numerous but silent groups wended their way toward Eyoub to catch a glimpse of the new sovereign as he passed. It was there that the Sultan, who had come by sea from Dolma-Bagtché, was to land, and where awaited him the high dignitaries of the Empire and the corps of ulémas. Two boats manned by seven oarsmen each led the procession; then came the superb gala barge, decorated in white and gold, with a raised daïs in crimson velvet, and rowed by twenty-eight oarsmen, in which Abdul-Hamid was seated, with four personages of his suite. Other boats follo

█ the princes of

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the Imperial family, accompanied by their suites.

This flotilla, saluted on its passage by all the guns of the Turkish ships and those of the foreign vessels in the harbour and by the cheers of their sailors who manned the yards, gaily decorated with bunting, stopped at Eyoub to the strains of music of the troops that lined Top-Hané, the Pointe du Sérail, and the Quai de l'Amirauté. There the delegate of the *Hunkiar-Mollah* of Koniah greeted the Sultan, and, after the customary prayers, girded him solemnly with the Sword of Osman. The ceremony came to a close with a visit which the Padishah paid to the sanctuaries of the mosque.

Afterward, Abdul-Hamid proceeded on horseback to Top-Capou, followed by numerous ulémas, officers, and functionaries. Ahead marched a corps of *zaptiés* and magnificent *seiss* from the Palace;

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behind them six saddle-horses of the Sultan's, led by grooms in livery; then came the officers and grand ulémas on horseback, accompanied by their domestics and *seiss*, and preceding the Sheik-ul-Islam on horseback, followed on foot by a large number of servants. Finally, in the centre of a double line of infantry, made up of superb body-guards, in red uniforms and having for head-dress the *kalpaks* with plumes, Sultan Abdul-Hamid II, in a dark blue coat, covered with gold embroidery, and wearing a plain fez, advanced majestically, mounted on a magnificent white horse, with gold trappings.

The splendid procession entered the city through the Adrien Gate, where the diplomatic corps in full force awaited it, and then proceeded toward Babi-Houmayoun.

After the usual congratulations and a brief rest, the sovereign left the Serai-

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Bournou Palace, and re-embarked to return to Dolma-Bagtché, amid the roar of the saluting guns.

In the evening the city was dazzling with illuminations and fireworks, but the people took little joy in watching the splendid spectacle which it had prepared to celebrate the investiture of the unhappy Mourad V.

On Sunday, September 10th, the Imperial *Hatt* (message) was made public at the Sublime Porte. It is, indeed, the custom for every new Sultan, on ascending the throne, to make known his intentions to his subjects in a formal proclamation called *Hatt*, which he sends in writing to the Grand Vizier, and which is then read aloud and with great solemnity at the Porte.

This is the translation of the *Hatt* of Abdul-Hamid II:

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“MY ILLUSTRIOUS VIZIER:

“Our well-beloved brother, Sultan Mourad V, having been compelled, by the will of Providence, to abandon the reins of State and the Caliphate, We have ascended the Throne of Our august ancestors, conformably to the Ottoman Law.

“In view of your well-known and tried patriotism and your high intelligence in the important interests of the State, We confirm you in the high duties of Grand Vizier and as President of the Council of Ministers. We maintain, likewise, all the Ministers and all the Functionaries in their respective posts. Our confidence in the aid and assistance of the Most High is unbounded in everything and under all circumstances. We have no other desire, or other thought, than to consolidate the bases on which the greatness and glory of Our Empire rest,

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and to insure to all Our subjects, without exception, the blessings of liberty, peace, and justice. We have the firm hope and conviction that all Our Ministers and all the Officials of Our Empire will not fail on their part to contribute their share by conforming themselves to Our example.

“The origin and causes of the crisis through which Our Empire is now passing and which is manifested under divers forms, are, it is true, many; but from whatever point of view they are regarded, they can be summarized under one head, namely, the imperfect enforcement of the laws framed according to the supreme directions of the *Chèri'i*, the fundamental basis of the power of Our Empire, and also the arbitrary methods that have been adopted in the conduct of public business.

“In fact, if the irregularities from

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which the administration and finances of Our country have been suffering some time have reached their present stage; if public opinion shows itself distrustful regarding our credit; if the tribunals have not yet succeeded in guaranteeing the rights of individuals; if it has not yet been possible to profit by the material resources which, as recognised by the whole world, our country contains in industry, commerce, and agriculture—those fecund sources of well-being and general prosperity; if, lastly, all the measures that have been taken up to now, as much in the interest of the country as in view of insuring for all Our subjects, without exception, the blessings of individual liberty, have not shown better results, in spite of the sincere intentions that dictated them or led through successive variations and changes to the proposed goal—all this can be attributed to only

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one cause, namely, that the laws have not been properly enforced.

“It is here, consequently, where we should start with the measures necessary to put the laws and regulations of the country on bases that inspire confidence.

“To this end it is indispensable that there be created a Council General whose acts shall inspire full confidence and shall be in harmony with the manners and capabilities of the different populations of the Empire. This council will have for its mandaté to guarantee, without exception, the faithful execution of the existing laws or of those that will be promulgated, conformably to the *Chèr'i*, according to the real and legitimate needs of the country and nation, and to control the equilibrium of the receipts and expenses of the Empire.

“The Council of Ministers is charged with the task of making a thorough study

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of this important question and of submitting to 'Us the results of its deliberations.

“Another thing that has prevented the proper execution of the laws and regulations is the frequency with which the public functions are often intrusted to inexperienced hands, and the fact that the employees are the objects of frequent changes not justified by legitimate motives, which causes very serious inconvenience to the State and to public business. Henceforth the appointment to all public posts will constitute a special career. To employ in offices of State capable and competent persons, to tolerate no dismissal or substitution without motive, to establish the responsibility of officials of all categories, each so far as it concerns himself—these are invariable rules that must be made.

“The material and moral progress



The Sultan at the time of his accession.



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that the entire world agrees in recognising in the European nations has been accomplished thanks to the spread of science and education. Now, as by their natural intelligence and character Our subjects of every class have in every respect, We are happy to say, special capacity for progress, and that the propagation of education constitutes in Our eyes a question as vital as it is urgent, you will take measures without delay to insure this important result by raising the figure of the budgetary appropriations in sufficient proportion and in the measure of the possible.

“Moreover, there must be immediate administrative, financial, and judicial reform in the provinces in order to create there a normal situation, conformable to the bases that will be adopted for the central organization.

“To the troubles that broke out last

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year in Bosnia and in Herzegovina at the instigation of evil-disposed persons, has been added the rebellion in Servia. Considering that blood spilled on either side is that of children of a same country, We are profoundly afflicted at the continuation of this state of things. You will take, therefore, the most efficacious measures to put an end to this deplorable situation.

“We confirm all the treaties made with the friendly Powers, and in observing their faithful execution you will consolidate more and more the friendly relations We maintain with these Powers.

“Such in substance are Our wishes, such are our intentions.

“That the Almighty may deign to crown our efforts with success!

“Given Sunday, 23 Chaban, 1293 (September 10, 1876).”

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This address, modest in form, giving evidence of prudence and manliness, and filled from start to finish with the sense of responsibility the new monarch seemed to feel, made in general a good impression. Only a few far-sighted sceptics were disappointed by its not very expansive tone, its timid allusions to all action in a liberal sense, and by the false idea that Abdul-Hamid appeared to entertain that the country could be regenerated by insisting on the observance of the *Chèri'i* laws—an antique and imperfect system of legislation.

But with these exceptions the Imperial message was approved. Except among a few the new Sultan inspired confidence and appeared to the greater number a man profoundly alive to the responsibility of his position, and who, animated with the noble desire to do his duty, was going to labour seriously at

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the difficult task he had just set himself.

Is it necessary to say that every act accomplished during the twenty-five years of his reign have only constituted a continual and more and more flagrant violation of the fine promises of the Imperial *Hatt*!

If the first attitude assumed by Abdul-Hamid was satisfactory, the new monarch very soon became unpopular owing to his repressions, banishments, and a thousand other severe measures. This policy quickly alienated the affection of the public, and all the more easily as the new Padishah personally was a distinctly unsympathetic personage.

Submitting without too great resistance to the pressure brought to bear by Midhat Pasha, who insisted on his keeping his promises, on December 10,

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1876, he promulgated the Constitution after making Midhat Grand Vizier, and thus began by a brilliant stroke.

But this Constitution, of which the Sultan soon felt the restraint, was scarcely decreed by him than he already began to think of abolishing it. However, fearing Midhat, the man who had dethroned two emperors and who could easily get rid of a third, he waited patiently for two months, during which he prepared in the background for the success of his design. At the termination of this time Abdul-Hamid, encouraged moreover by Russian intrigues, burned his bridges by suddenly having his Grand Vizier arrested, and later sent into exile, and from that time on he awaited impatiently the moment when he could unmask completely.

The sittings in the Chamber had become stormy. There had been violent

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friction between the representatives of the nation and the responsible ministers who, accustomed until then to render no accounts of their offices, had now to face exacting masters. Abdul-Hamid watched attentively and with secret satisfaction the progress of events. For the last time he played a trump card in at first refusing the proposition made by the Porte to dissolve the Chamber, and in only acting on the suggestion later, after having had conferred upon himself, by solemn decision of a grand extraordinary council convoked at the Palace, the right of suspending the Constitution and that of decreeing a state of siege—under the pretext of preventing an eventual rising of the Christians rendered probable by the approach of the Russians—but in reality to arm himself against the opposition which he thought must result from the violation of the Constitution.

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The Porte therefore submitted and dismissed itself, placing the power in the hands of the monarch, yesterday constitutional, to-day absolute, and who was soon to become one of the most tyrannical despots yet mentioned by history.

The strangling of the Constitution was followed by new and numerous measures of severity and arbitrary acts: condemnations of suspected persons, deportation of liberal deputies. Then it was that the tyrant, to insure his domination, retired to his immense fortress at Yildiz, where he took care to surround himself with a veritable army upon the fidelity of which he could count.

Having thus become absolute master of the situation, Abdul-Hamid did not push his victory further. All his efforts now tended to dissimulate the importance of this first success and to combat his growing unpopularity, caused by the

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deplorable result of the Russo-Turkish war.

From this moment, moreover, the surveillance of his enemies, real and imaginary, engrossed all his attention. The necessity of being accurately informed about all done, said, or thought everywhere throughout his Empire led him to create a vast system of espionage and another of clandestine and summary executions, systems which by dint of being constantly improved have become state institutions.

And so it is that, since 1878, the Porte finding itself reduced to the most absolute subjection, all the power and all the resources of the country are concentrated at Yildiz, where the Sultan began to work tirelessly to impoverish the people morally and materially in order to oppress it more surely; to stifle public education; to destroy all that still remained in the

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country of political and religious liberty; to gag the press; * to put into practice the famous maxim, *Dividi et impera*; to cancel the capitulations, also the concessions and privileges granted by Imperial

* Not satisfied with imposing silence on the Turkish press, Abdul-Hamid sometimes has that of other countries silenced.

Yet the Sultan conceived in 1886 the absurd idea of founding a great national journal, printed in Turkish, French, and English, which was to be for Turkey the equivalent of what the *Times* is for England. A committee consisting of Ebul-Huda, Osman Bey, first chamberlain, Raghîb Bey, third chamberlain, Mahmoud Effendi, *Guidich-Meemourou*, Weiss Bey, a Hungarian in the service of Turkey, and some other personages, was even instructed to study this ridiculous idea and elaborate a programme. One of the members of the committee declared to his colleagues that three things were, in his opinion, indispensable to establish the proposed newspaper: 1st, a million pounds Turkish; 2d, one hundred and fifty years' time; 3d, a constitution for the country. They then explained to the Sultan that the *Times* was the organ of public opinion, and that the very conditions of its existence were the liberty which was enjoyed in England and the country's moral and material prosperity. One might without difficulty have found a hundred other reasons to demonstrate to the Sultan the ridicule of his dream; but there was no necessity to put forward others. As soon as Abdul-Hamid understood that his newspaper ought to express the public opinion of his Empire he abandoned his project with horror.

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firmans to non-Mussulman communities; to erect insurmountable barriers between Turkey and Europe, so that foreign influence could not open the eyes of his subjects; and to attempt, but in vain, the pan-Islamic crusade or gathering of all the Mussulmans under the standard of the Calipha.

And while condemnations, banishments, and punishments continued, he also inaugurated the system of wholesale executions by the famous drowning of the *softas* who had been dissatisfied with the results of the Russo-Turkish war. Lastly, in 1881, came the celebrated trial of Midhat and his friends, which raised the last veil and showed the Sultan in his true colours.

But if, before then, the monarch had deceived public opinion as to his true character, a goodly number of persons who approached him and saw him at

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work at the beginning of his reign have given their opinion of him.

“It took me three months to know Abdul-Aziz; three hours were sufficient to judge Abdul-Hamid,” said the former Grand Vizier Mehmed-Ruchdi Pasha one day to his friend Akif Pasha, alluding to the first audience which the Sultan granted him the day following his proclamation. On coming out from this interview, which was a long one, Ruchdi was so convinced that he said to the famous Mahmoud-Djelaleddin Pasha, who, in his quality as Grand Referendary of the Sublime Porte, had accompanied him to the Imperial Palace: “Our new master has all faults imaginable and presumption into the bargain; he is ignorant of everything and thinks he knows it all.” And the Grand Vizier added, with the air of a man filled with regret and sadness, *Haltittik* (What a blunder we have made)!

CHAPTER III

ABDUL-HAMID II—THE MAN

THE Sultan completed his fifty-ninth year on September 22, 1901.

Time has worked great changes in his Majesty's appearance, and it is only with difficulty that one can now recognise in him the Prince Hamid represented in the portrait taken of him at the time he mounted the throne.

His jaws have grown broader, giving to his face a brutality it did not have before; the cheek-bones, formerly unnoticeable, protrude prominently on hollow cheeks which have been covered for more than twenty years by a short beard, now quite gray, and which he himself dyes

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very clumsily various shades of brown and brownish red with a mixture of coffee and gall-nut, the recipe for which was given him by a sheik.*

His forehead bulges out slightly, and he conceals his baldness under the enormous fez which he has made fashionable in Turkey, and the form, size, and colour of which make the emaciated paleness of his face seem even more sickly.

His nose has become more hooked. A stronger mustache, also dyed, which his delicate and thin hand often caresses with a mechanical gesture, now conceals

* Abdul-Hamid does not permit his vanity to go to the extreme of denying the use he makes of dyes to dissimulate the ravages of time. But he none the less blames others for doing the same thing. Talking one day with his Grand Master of the Ceremonies, Munir Pasha, he expressed himself as greatly displeased with his minister Hafreddin Pasha, who was in the habit of dyeing his hair. Yet, a few days later, noticing that Munir Pasha was beginning to get gray, he suggested that he do the same. "I would not wish your Majesty to criticise me, as you did Hafreddin," replied the Pasha. "Oh, don't mind that," said the Sultan, good-humoured again, "I do as much myself."

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almost entirely the upper lip, which is thin and cruel. The lower lip has become still thicker and has accentuated his sensual expression. The line of cruelty which completes the character of this mouth, so interesting for the physiognomist, is also deeper and more apparent.

The flattened temples, with the widely separated orbits, have become more hollow, and in the depths of the eyes, now half hidden under the drooping eyelids and heavy lashes, seems to be smouldering the vacillating flame of his glance.

The eyes are the most disconcerting part of this complex physiognomy. Reflecting usually uneasy melancholy and falseness, at other times they will stare for a long time into vacancy as though absorbed in thought, and then, if a flash of anger or fear lightens up the dark-gray iris, the colour of a stormy sky, they instantly become remarkably keen and

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alert, and, like the eyes of the insane, cause those whose glance they meet a painful impression that can be borne only after long familiarity.

In short, the entire physiognomy of the Sultan confirms his divers characteristics, even that of the hypocritical gentleness that he assumes at times.

Of medium height, slightly rickety on his legs, and painfully thin, he seems now only to have his breath left, and, in fact, it is his nerves that keep him alive. Such a constitution must necessarily influence his mentality. Abdul-Hamid is, in truth, a victim of neurasthenia, and a monomaniac. His physical condition alone can explain the contradictions of his character.

A Turk who has lived a long time in close intimacy with him has said of him: "I do not yet know whether he is intelligent or stupid, courageous or cowardly,

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sane or mad." His psychological condition presents a problem—but a problem that can be solved by study.

The Sultan is very intelligent. But tyranny and the continual fear in which he lives have led him to devote all his energies to his personal preservation, and to use only the faculties which contribute to that end, such as distrust, cunning, and the instinct of defence. These faculties are monstrously developed to the suffocation of the others, and in his brain, wearied by neurasthenia, have become tyrannical passions. Thus in the progress of time Abdul-Hamid has ended by becoming a true monomaniac, of the class known to doctors as the "*persecuting persecuted*."

He is gifted with an acute scent and keen perspicacity which enables him to grasp at once the drift of events and ascertain the nature of the danger threat-

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ening him, which his imagination exaggerates out of all proportion. This explains the violence of his repressions. Thanks to the clearness of his perception he can watch the undercurrents, and he knows how to extricate himself from the most critical situations. Analyst and psychologist, he understands men and knows how to use them.

He has shown perfect knowledge of the little tricks of diplomacy. He knows how to neutralize the claims of the Powers by sowing discord among them. At the time of the Armenian massacre, in 1896, he showed Chinese astuteness in this regard.

But all this intelligence is misdirected. Living in continual terror of death, a victim of frightful nightmares, remorse and weariness, this constant thinking of nothing but his own safety has prompted him to carry the severity of his punishments

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and the precautions inspired by his distrust to the point of cruelty. And instead of serving the cause of his country this wretched monarch, concerned only with himself, oppresses his subjects, checks all intellectual development, and ruins his Empire by allowing it to be robbed of its most beautiful provinces.

If, as has been said, generalizing rather too freely, cunning is the intelligence of the Oriental people, the Sultan may be considered among them as a man of genius. It was, indeed, by cunning that he arrived in power, and it is by the same method that he now keeps himself there and that he governs.

He is full of dissimulated obstinacy, and only yields to force with the secret intention of getting back later what he is compelled temporarily to abandon. He is never at a loss for expedients, is a deep calculator, and knows admirably how to

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escape dangers by stratagems that are always new. He is a skilful layer of traps, and capable of all kinds of abjectness toward his enemies when he fears them and of the greatest cruelty when he has them in his power, and he enjoys his vengeance all the more for having patiently nourished it in secret.

Not only is the life of a man who is troublesome to him nothing to him, but spilled blood seems to calm and soothe his shattered nerves, always stretched to the snapping point. "At night, before going to sleep," says one of his chamberlains, "he has some one read to him. His favourite books are those giving detailed accounts of assassinations and executions. The stories of crimes excite him and prevent him sleeping, but as soon as his reader reaches a passage where blood flows, the Sultan immediately becomes calm and falls asleep."

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His nature, in fact, is cruel. When Neby-Agha executed the unfortunate Midhat and Mahmoud-Djellaleddin Pashas, at Taifa, the Sultan, wishing to see the heads of his victims, ordered them to be embalmed and sent to Constantinople. In this must be seen also a precaution inspired by distrust, Abdul-Hamid wishing to be sure that his two enemies were dead.

The Padishah's mistrust of every one is sometimes carried to a degree bordering on insanity. Kadri Pasha, whom he had disgraced and appointed vali of Adrianople, died some time afterward. His remains were to be interred at Constantinople, and the coffin containing the body was on the way when the Sultan suddenly ordered that it should be sent back to the place whence it came—a suspicion having suddenly arisen in his mind that perhaps Kadri Pasha was not dead after

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all, but that he was perhaps attempting—lying in a coffin—to gain admission to the capital in order to conspire against his master.

Another time, the day following the attempt on his life by Ali-Souavi and the revolt at Tcheragan, both of which incidents greatly upset him, Abdul-Hamid called his first secretary, who at that time was Ali-Fuad Bey, led him to a window, and, pointing to the Sublime Porte some miles away, said, trembling with fear:

“Do you see them? They have met yonder to proclaim my downfall!”

“Who?” asked the startled secretary.

“My ministers,” replied the Sultan.
“My own ministers are now in the act of dethroning me. Can’t you see them?”

Ali-Fuad Bey had the greatest possible difficulty in calming his master’s hallucination.

But he has also given many instances

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of downright cruelty which, even when it only slumbers in him, is often shown in his moments of gaiety or anger.

One day, as they were discussing in his presence the barbarous custom popular among the previous Sultans of exhibiting in the courtyard of the Old Seraglio the decapitated head of each vizier who had fallen from favour so that the spectacle might serve as a salutary warning to his successor, Abdul-Hamid grew pensive, and at last said:

“It’s too bad I can’t do the same.” He gave a forced smile as he spoke, to make those present believe he meant it as a joke.

When, in 1896, he received in audience the Armenian Patriarch, Mgr. Achikian, after an Armenian demonstration at the Porte, which only preceded the great massacres by a short time, Abdul-Hamid said to the venerable prelate:

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“They * perhaps seek by these methods to bring about a European intervention. Tell them this from me: the foreign fleets may pass through the Straits and the European armies invade my capital, but before they tread this soil the waters of the Bosphorus shall be dyed with the blood of all the Armenians!”

The old man, terrified, fell on his knees and tried to move the Sultan to pity. Abdul-Hamid, however, refused to hear him further, and commanded him abruptly to withdraw.

He had probably forgotten these remarks when, in the course of an audience granted to Mgr. Azarian after the great butcheries of 1896, he declared he was in no way responsible for the massacres, of which he disapproved, and which, he said, he had been obliged to order.

Be it from forgetfulness or hypocrisy,

* The Armenians.

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Abdul-Hamid never confesses to anything.

Among the many crimes of which he is suspected there is one which made a great sensation. One of his body-guards, an Albanian named Gani Bey, who, high in his favour, had committed the most atrocious deeds, as much on his own account as on that of his master, ended by becoming troublesome. The Sultan soon got rid of him, the man being stabbed in a milk shop at Pera by one Hafouz-Omer Pasha. The Sultan displayed deep emotion on learning of the murder, and ordered the arrest and punishment of the assassin, while secretly Yildiz agents facilitated the flight of the latter abroad.

At the same time Abdul-Hamid caused to be spread false reports which pointed to Djavib Bey, son of the Grand Vizier Halil-Rifaat Pasha—a man who

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was causing him considerable uneasiness—as the real instigator of the crime. These slanderous stories were supported by the most plausible arguments, such as the hatred Djavib was known to have borne Gani for having been insulted by him in public. A perfect comedian, the Sultan pretended to give credence to these lies, which originated with him, and carried his impudence so far as to feign indignation and call for the punishment of the innocent man he accused. He at first thought of appealing to the vendetta, which is even more in vogue among the Albanians than among the Corsicans, by telling Halil Bey, bodyguard like Gani, and brother-in-law of the latter, that the assassination of his relative, a devoted servant of the throne, was a personal insult toward him, Abdul-Hamid.

“Do you authorize me, sire,” asked

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the touchy Albanian, "to avenge my brother's blood?"

"No, no, no, Halil, not yet," replied the Sultan quickly, and thus authorizing sufficiently the murder that he himself so much desired.

Vengeance is a dish eaten cold, in the Orient more even than elsewhere. Seven months went by without incident, during which Halil Bey and another of his relatives, the sinister Essad Pasha, chief of the Janina *gendarmerie*, prepared everything for the carrying out of their design, the master not interfering in any way. Finally, in the autumn of 1900, Essad charged with the murderous mission one of the former servants of the Gani family, named Hadji-Moustapha. This man went to Constantinople, waited in broad daylight on the Karakeui bridge for Djavib Bey to pass, and killed him with three shots from a revolver. The mur-

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derer was arrested, tried, and condemned to death. In spite, however, of the energetic protest of the Grand Vizier, not only the man remained unpunished, but he was liberally rewarded and is still living in some distant province with the satisfaction that comes from duty well done.

*Ab uno disce omnes.**

Such are the discreet means that the Sultan employs to get rid of troublesome people, and such is his skill that it is rarely any one escapes him.

Among the latter, however, must be counted Odian-Effendi, former Under-Secretary of State at the Ministry of Commerce and Public Works. The Sultan, for divers reasons, was about to have him

* It seems, however, that of late more scientific measures are used. Thus it was whispered at Constantinople last August—and we chronicle the report without guaranteeing its authenticity—that the former Grand Vizier, Marshal Djevad Pasha, who died last July of phthisis, had really partaken of a bouillon inoculated with tubercle bacilli. We are, as is seen, far from the classic cup of coffee.

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put out of the way when the then Grand Master of Ceremonies, Kiamil Bey, learning of his master's secret design, warned Odian-Effendi in time, and the latter saved his life by fleeing to Paris.

Abdul-Hamid sometimes acts in cold blood, at other times in a fit of anger. When premeditated, his cruelty is more refined and subtle; when angry he becomes brutal, and, forgetting his usual prudence and cunning, betrays his true character.

The Sultan, like all neurotics, has moments of great irritability, during which he becomes violent. Several times he has beaten his secretaries or his chamberlains. Once he threw his inkstand at the head of Kutchuk-Said Pasha, then secretary-in-chief of the Palace, who was able to dodge his head in time. Another day, suddenly enraged with the same personage during a discussion on the Egyptian

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question, he drew from his pocket a revolver and threatened to fire at the pasha, who, terrified, implored his pardon.

It is said that Abdul-Hamid quickly regrets his violence, which he fears will arouse the resentment of his suite. It is, moreover, his policy as well as his temperament to make people think him gentle and good, and to pretend that he has in reserve vast stores of tenderness. He tries to enlist sympathies everywhere, feeling that no one loves him. Thus he poses often as a victim, complaining of the malice and ingratitude of men, and his complaints have such an accent of sincerity that for the moment they deceive those who listen.

Although his voice is naturally deep and strong, he knows how to make it caressing and almost gentle, when he wants to, and he has the gift of making himself agreeable in order to win the friendship

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of those who approach him, especially foreigners. He takes all kinds of pains to please them, and it is seldom that a European leaves him without being fascinated by his cordial and charming manner and exquisite tact. The Sultan, in fact, practices the art of politeness and hospitality not only as an Oriental, but also as a European. Nowhere are foreign notabilities received as royally as at Yildiz, and even mere tourists passing through Constantinople and present at Selamlyk, will be received with honours. If they form a numerous party all kinds of flattering attentions are showered upon them during the ceremony, and they find before leaving a sumptuous lunch served on the terrace of the Yildiz Kiosk. Cigarettes are presented to them, and an aide-de-camp of the Sultan conveys to them the Imperial compliments. Again, at their departure

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from Constantinople—a full view of which has been facilitated by an order from the Palace—Gen. Scheker-Ahmed Pasha presents them with Turkish sweetmeats, cigarettes, etc., as souvenirs of his Majesty. And the visitors go away delighted with their visit, convinced that the Sultan is a most affable and courteous prince, and that the complaints of Europe are entirely unjustified.

In thus trying to win the sympathy of foreigners by these little means, he thinks he counteracts the harm that the independent press of Europe, which is hostile to him, does him in the minds of the general public.

Even toward his own subjects he also endeavours to appear benevolent and good when it is to his interest. Sometimes a functionary or grand personage falls ill. A chamberlain goes and inquires after his health with the compli-

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ments of the sovereign; a court physician goes to attend him; if he dies and leaves sons whose fidelity the master wishes to secure, the interment is paid for out of the Imperial private purse.

Sometimes he attempts by feigned amiability to win over some man he fears and on whom he has no hold, and then there is nothing to which he will not stoop in order to obtain by cunning what he can not obtain by force.

Instances abound of this complete absence of dignity. The first secretary of an embassy, a quick-tempered and blunt man very much feared at Yildiz, had three years ago a violent altercation with Izzet Bey, then all-powerful. The Sultan, who had reasons to fear the consequences of a quarrel, wished to reconcile the two adversaries, and in order to appease the European diplomatist, who displayed violent anger, he pleaded with

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him, promised him all kinds of compensation, and ended by taking his hands and begging him to pardon his favourite.

It is so natural to him to lack majesty that in his joyous moments he forgets his grandeur. When the London press, after the Armenian massacres, urged Europe to depose him whom Gladstone called *The Great Assassin*, and the fleet of Admiral Seymour was manœuvring in a disquieting manner in the waters of the Archipelago, the Sultan, one night, from information sent by the Ottoman embassy in London, had reason to think that flight abroad was his only means of safety. He summoned his ministers in extraordinary council to deliberate on the situation, while his yacht Izzeddin was anchored off Bechiktach with steam up ready to take him to Odessa. One of the ministers, Mahmoud-Djellaleddin Pasha, suggested that the German embassy be con-

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sulted. The Sultan immediately despatched his favourite, Izzet Bey, to the representative of Kaiser Wilhelm. During the absence of his envoy the Sultan, his face the picture of anxiety and gloom, paced feverishly up and down the room. He had on his person all his jewels, and bonds for a considerable amount could be seen stuffed into the pockets of his belt. But when Izzet Bey brought back the promise that Wilhelm would stand by *his friend*, Abdul-Hamid so far forgot himself for joy that he almost knelt down before the favourite, so profuse was he in his assurances of his gratitude and affection.

It is easily understood that the Sultan has little sympathy with men of independent character, who exasperate and alarm him. There is no method he does not employ to corrupt such men. He often summons to the Palace the person-

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ages he knows to be hostile to him and whose natural dignity of character keeps them aloof. Forced to respond to the invitation, they are received very courteously at the Yildiz by a chamberlain or secretary, who, after paying the conventional compliments on behalf of the sovereign, enumerates at length the qualities and virtues of the Master, followed by a dithyrambic in poetic prose dedicated to his Majesty. And when, after this ordeal, the orator considers the patient sufficiently tractable, he attempts to make him swallow this Imperial gilded pill:

“He does not love me. What have I done to him? Let him become attached to my person, let him be faithful and I'll reward him liberally. I'll make him a rich man. I'll shower favours upon him. I'll make him minister, ambassador, but let him give me proofs of fidelity and

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devotion. For instance, he is in a position to know much of what is going on. Let him take me into his confidence. No one will ever know. It will always be between ourselves. What does he know, for instance, about —— Pasha or —— Bey? He knows them, associates with them, and is therefore familiar with their political opinions. Why does he not come and unbosom himself to me—the Father of my people, and who consequently should know all,” etc., etc.

But the patient receives these overtures coldly and insists that he has nothing to tell. The chamberlain then goes away and hastens to report to the Sultan the failure of the attempt. Abdul-Hamid persists. They will follow another plan of attack, and if this fails they will try a third. Finally, if the Imperial offer is still rejected, the Sultan does not appear at first to entertain any resentment

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toward him, saying: "He refuses? I am sorry. He does not know how well I reward services done me."

But it is not long before one is made to feel cruelly the hatred this independent attitude has aroused; the best thing then to do for him whom the Padishah honours with his personal dislike is to go and take a short tour in Europe.

The above is one of the forms of the system of corruption invented by Abdul-Hamid and applied by his satellites, who try it principally on the younger Turks. One can have no idea of the patient cunning, the roundabout methods employed in Constantinople to win the young generation of Turks over to the Sultan's side. They know, for instance, that a young man's relations and friendships give him the opportunity of learning certain little secrets of great interest to the monarch, and they leave no stone unturned to get

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him to talk. They promise him positions, honours, favours, decorations, promotion, money—especially money! They are even capable of making a pretty woman the prize; in short, they put forward what they think will tempt him most. If this inexperienced young man is at all weak or lacking in character he will find himself so hemmed in, so skilfully entangled, that, after brief hesitation, he will end by becoming the tyrant's creature.

If, on the contrary, he resists and shows that he can not be tempted, he invites for himself an existence made miserable by espionage, calumny, and persecutions of all kinds.

Thus it is that Abdul-Hamid has succeeded in corrupting in part the *élite* of the nation and in creating a generation in which have been constantly and painstakingly inoculated the most immoral and degrading principles. He knows the

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power of gold, and he uses to corrupt the country the riches he wrests from it. He has no love for honest men, for he sees in them adversaries of his policy and censors of his conduct. Three days after his appointment to the Ministry of War the former Seraskier Ali-Saïb Pasha was received by the Sultan. Saïb had enjoyed a spotless reputation until then. In the course of the conversation his master said to him: "Listen, Seraskier, I want the men who serve me to show devotion, but I want them also to make money."

Ali-Saïb Pasha was dumfounded, and has since said that this remark made a very painful impression on him. This, however, did not prevent his Majesty from noticing a little later that his minister had profited by the lesson.

But the work of the Imperial corrupter has gone beyond the limits of his

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Palace and his states. Has he not, in fact, silenced with gilded gags the voices of importunate organs of the European press? Has he not bought abroad politicians and even diplomatists?

Saïd Pasha, having ascertained what in six months the Armenian massacres had cost the Turkish Treasury in allocations to certain European newspapers, found it was approximately 640 decorations and £235,000 Turkish.

Abdul-Hamid stops at nothing, and this small-footed Juggernaut has attempted bribery in the strangest places. Did he not try to buy the *Times*? And at the opening of the Congress of Berlin did he not say to his minister, Savfet Pasha, "With a million pounds Turkish we could silence Bismarck"?

Does the Sultan, who does not always believe in the virtue of man, believe in God? Does he who outrages earthly jus-



Dolma-Baghtché Palace, the most beautiful in Constantinople.

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tice so infamously believe in heavenly justice? In this respect, also, he is full of contradictions.

Abdul-Hamid is a sceptic. He is neither pious nor a believer, but he is superstitious, fanatical, credulous, and, being naturally sombre and pessimistic, his religion is sad, and made up of fear and terror. He fears the Unknown, and the nightmare of death often haunts and torments him. At such times he prays with fervour, with fits and starts. He has even been known, they say, to have made secret vows and to have imposed mortifications on himself in order to please Allah and redeem his sins; but he soon becomes discouraged and relapses into his scepticism—the pillow of doubt, as Montaigne says, alone being able to procure for him restful sleep.

The Commander of the Faithful is not, therefore, strict in his religious observ-

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ances. He neglects the five *namaz* (daily prayers ordered by the Koran) and does not observe regularly *ouroutz* (the fast of Ramazan). But, a clever man and knowing the force of religious feeling in the Mussulmans, and knowing too that it was his lack of religion that made his uncle Abdul-Aziz very unpopular, he tries to win the sympathy of his subjects by professing the most profound respect for the law of the Prophet.

An uléma with whom we were discussing Abdul-Hamid's religious convictions, said: "His policy constantly violates our Prophet's holy law. A good Mussulman would never act as he does; the Calipha is, therefore, a bad Mussulman, and religion in his eyes is only a political instrument which he uses, not to develop the nation's moral character, but to exploit the fanaticism of the ignorant classes."

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It is well known, in fact, that the Koran, whose interpretation is very elastic, is, at bottom, very liberal in tendency. Abdul-Hamid, it can be easily understood, does not relish this fundamental quality of the sacred Book of Islam. He has always been opposed to all enlightened interpretations of the Law of Mahomet as likely to awaken the spirit of independence slumbering in the soul of the people. Recently the Uléma Erbilli Essad-Effendi published, with the authorization of the Minister of Public Instruction, a work on morals inspired by the very essence of the principles of the Koran. This displeased the Sultan. The author was arrested and exiled to Mecca, and the minister, for having permitted the publication of the work, was severely censured by the Imperial chancellerie, which, to explain the placing of the book on the Index, declared it contained

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hadis * that were harmful (*ehadissi-mou-zirré*).

The incident made a great noise and excited all the more indignation among the ulémas as the qualification “harmful” applied to the *hadis* constitutes a sacrilegious insult to Mahomet.

Because Abdul-Hamid is not a good Mussulman it must not be inferred that he loves Christians. On the contrary, he detests them, and frequently uses the word *giaour* to designate a person in whom he has lost faith, or to insult a Mussulman.

This, however, does not prevent him from feigning, according to circumstances, not only tolerance, but even respect for the various forms of worship. When he receives the Ecumenical Patriarch he tells him that orthodoxy is the

* Those precepts of the Prophet not contained in the Koran are so designated.

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strongest of religions; to the Chaldean Patriarch he says his manner of worship is the most logical; and he assures the Grand Rabbi that the law of Moses approaches most closely that of the Prophet. The ex-Grand Master of Ceremonies, Munir Pasha, tells regarding this a significant anecdote. The Sultan one day was praising in presence of Mgr. Bonnetti, the apostolic delegate at Constantinople, the grandeur of Catholicism and the glory of the papacy with a fervour which appeared to move the delegate profoundly. At the close of the audience, as Munir Pasha returned from showing the prelate out, the Calipha burst out laughing and said: "Imbecile! He believed all I told him. He was even moved to tears!"

The Sultan despises Christians, but renegades still more. This is perhaps owing to the fact that formerly he had

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a favourite, born a Christian, who became converted to Islamism. This man, Georges A——, belonged to one of the most illustrious families of Phanar. Having become a Mussulman, as much from caprice as to please Abdul-Hamid, he was made aide-de-camp and assumed the name of Seïfoullah, under which he became very influential, thanks to the special favour of the Sultan he enjoyed owing to his knowledge of alchemy, astrology, magic, and other occult sciences in which the Padishah has been interested since his adolescence. Later, Seïfoullah having been convicted of plotting against the life of his benefactor, matters went badly with him. He was exiled to Benghazi, where he died mysteriously.

In spite of what most Turks say, it is difficult to believe that Abdul-Hamid hates the people like his cousin Youssouf-

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Izzeddin.* But while he fears his subjects and seeks popularity, the Sultan affects to be indifferent to public opinion and to despise it. He sees in his people a vile herd that he may destroy without pity, and which, like the lion in the fable, he does great honour in deigning to devour. One day we were very much surprised to hear Ahmed-Midhat-Effendi—a writer of merit, who made the mistake of letting the Sultan talk him over—express the real sentiments of his master on this point: that all who criticise that great prince are enemies to their country, ingrates, blind; that Abdul-Hamid should have reigned over the greatest nation in the world, etc., etc. This went on in like manner for a long time, and the Imperial censor-bearer put into his words an apparent conviction that amused us, while

* Eldest son of Abdul-Aziz, a proud, fanatical prince detesting the Turkish people, whom he holds responsible for his father's sad end.

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the third auditor of this comic tirade, Youssouf-Zia Pasha El-Khalidi, approved all he said with a deferential nod, at the same time giving us a friendly wink to do the same.

If the Sultan has too good an opinion of himself, it must be admitted that, on the other hand, he does his ministers and all his suite full justice, despising them as do all the independent Turks. One day, while talking with the Sheik Zafer, he drew the moral portraits of most of these personages, and especially of Izzet Bey, his former favourite; the celebrated Ebul Huda; the famous Loufti, his counsellor; the latter's son, Faïk Bey, yet his favourite chamberlain; Hadji-Ali Bey and Nouri Pasha, his first and second chamberlains, and he set forth their qualities in terms that my pen is too modest to transcribe.

Another time M. Vambéry, the well-

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known orientalist, was seated near the Sultan chatting on one thing and another, and his Majesty was listening with manifest satisfaction. Saïd Pasha—one of those Turkish statesmen of remarkable ability who have, nevertheless, done their country harm—was present at the audience, and was standing up at the other end of the room. He had his arms folded and his body bent forward in an attitude of deep humility and *ennui*, being too far from the Sultan and his interlocutor to hear anything of their conversation. The subject under discussion being domestic affairs, M. Vambéry spoke of reforms and thought it would flatter his august interlocutor to praise his ministers. The Sultan began to laugh. "They are idiots!" he said. "Shall I convince you?" And as M. Vambéry protested amiably, his Majesty, raising his voice, asked Saïd Pasha, "Is it not so?" "Yes, sire," the

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Grand Vizier hastened to reply. Then Abdul-Hamid, turning toward his guest, said triumphantly: "What did I tell you? and they are all like that one."

It is thus seen in what esteem the Padishah holds those he associates with his power. He looks upon them only as passive automatons which he would break if they ever made a gesture not ordered by his all-powerful will.

The former Grand Master of Ceremonies, Munir Pasha, said: "Abdul-Hamid has corrupted his suite." It is more just to say that it was because of its corruption that the Sultan selected it; nor can we admit the arguments of those casuists who try to cleanse the Sultan of the stains of his reign by saying that he is subject to the influence of an odious *camarilla*, that he is constantly deceived, that the truth never reaches him, and, moreover, that it was impossible for him to

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save an Empire which he found already in a state of decomposition.

But, if all the ills from which Turkey is suffering are the work of his suite, that is all the more reason why the Sultan should be held responsible, since he alone holds in his hands the strings of these puppets, who act only by his orders and who have never shown the slightest desire to take the initiative.

The truth is that Abdul-Hamid is very obstinate in his ideas, and that if he has only bad influences around him, it is because they are the only kind of influences he wants; he follows advice given him only when it is in accordance with his own intentions.

After the massacres of Constantinople he asked several personages their advice on the line of policy to follow to re-establish peace in the country. The chamberlain Emin Bey, one of the few men one

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meets at Yildiz possessing character and a conscience, urged him to introduce sweeping reforms in a liberal sense, and presented a scheme on those lines. Since that day Emin Bey has been in disgrace. On the other hand, it sufficed for Izzet Bey to advise new coercive measures to become the all-powerful favourite that we know. Like all tyrants, Abdul-Hamid only tolerates around him the most absolute submission and passivity.

It has also been said that the Sultan is constantly deceived as to the real truth of matters. This assertion is in part false, for if he is often deceived regarding certain things, on the other hand he sees clearly enough around him and learns all what is going on, thanks to his excessive curiosity and mistrust and to the innumerable reports of his spies. In any case, he is not ignorant of the sad condition to which he has reduced the

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country, but that is a detail that leaves him indifferent.

As to saying that it was impossible for him to save his Empire, is it necessary to insist on the slight foundation for such an argument? Abdul-Hamid has never attempted to better his country. On the contrary, he has done everything for twenty-five years to ruin it. He stifled the budding liberalism which might be for his people a resurrection; he cut the throat of its independence in the cradle, seized power by intrigue, kept it by force and cunning, and concentrated it by violence. He has paralyzed patriotism, gagged truth, and put in chains independence of thought and conscience; he has massacred entire populations of his Empire, parts of which he has also traded over to the foreigner. And, busy only with strengthening the throne, on which he has promised himself to remain

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at all costs, he has drawn the elements of his oppressive power from favouritism, espionage, ignorance, administrative anarchy, tyranny, cruelties, corruption; from the rapes of his favourites gorged with gold, from their quarrels, and from every iniquity, violence, and injustice.

Abdul-Hamid has made the most frightful abuse of two combined devices, which, applied each in turn in a state otherwise powerful than his own, have twice ruined it: "I am the State," and "After me the Deluge."

But who knows if the deluge that Abdul-Hamid is preparing for his successor will not shake the world to its foundations?

CHAPTER IV

YILDIZ

IN 1832 Sultan Mahmoud, Abdul-Hamid's grandfather, had built on the top of Bechiktach hill, on the European side of the Bosphorus, a kiosk of small dimensions surrounded by a large garden, and baptized it with the attractive name of Yildiz (star).


In 1884 Abdul-Hamid's father, Sultan Medjid, pulled down this pavilion and replaced it by a larger one, which he devoted to his own private use, entertaining there his favourites, and especially a Circassian woman named Yildiz, of whom he was particularly fond.

Later Abdul-Aziz enlarged the park, extending it as far as Tcheragan Palace,

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situated on the seashore. He also had built several pretty pavilions scattered here and there through the park, where they still stand to-day, although slightly altered. These are the Tchit Kiosk, the Malta Kiosk, the Tchadir Kiosk, etc., and the largest of all, in which are the offices of the chamberlains, and which has retained the name Yildiz, but which is better known as *Mabeïne* (the Court).

A few months after his accession to the throne and from the beginning of the Russo-Turkish war, the period when the persecution monomania with which he is afflicted first showed itself, Abdul-Hamid, fearing both the proximity of the sea and his own subjects, no longer felt safe in the splendid palace of Dolma-Bagtché, in which had lived successively Aziz and Mourad, and transferred his residence to the Yildiz estate, admirably situated from the strategical point of view. He



Yildiz

enlarged the park, and from Bechiktach hill extended it as far as Ortakeui hill, buying, but more often seizing, many public and private lands, and thus illustrating the justice of the Arabian proverb which says: "Live next to fire rather than next to the Sultan."

He intrenched himself in Yildiz as if he were about to sustain a siege, fortified himself in it, and has never ceased since adding to the means of defence and insuring his safety, on which depend his throne and his life.

From that time all over the immense estate sprang up a rapid growth of kiosks, pavilions, cottages, belvederes—heteroclite confusion of every description and style.

Correctly speaking, Yildiz is not a palace. No master conception, no reasoned-out plan is visible in this chaos of buildings constituting the Imperial residence,

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but one feels everywhere at Yildiz the uneasy and contradictory whims of a fantastic mind. "It looks," said one of his architects, "as if the Sultan were camping out there, ready to fold his tents at the first sign of danger."

They build, pull down, build again to pull down again, without ceasing or rest during the entire three hundred and sixty-five days of the year. All this time the Palace architects have to study on an average two hundred plans for new buildings.

Happily for them, a great part of their plans and estimates go to slumber in his Majesty's desk, for they have enough, if not too much work already.

Abdul-Hamid has the building fever, an innocent mania common among Orientals, who believe that the more a man builds the longer he will live.

A considerable number of European



Yildiz

architects and engineers are employed by the Sultan. As he is as distrustful of them as of every one else, he makes their work very difficult by compelling them to take a number of absurd precautions intended to surround their work with the most absolute secrecy—plans, designs, and buildings in course of construction—for fear that details of this nature being divulged, imaginary conspirators might find it easy to attempt some bold stroke.

This ridiculous caution often causes the builders real embarrassment; for instance, they are strictly forbidden to measure otherwise than by paces the distance separating two buildings.

If Yildiz is, as we have said, a barbarous medley of incongruous dwellings, it is particularly to Abdul-Hamid's fear and the conditions it has tyrannically imposed in building—the composition of the façades, the arrangement of the apart-

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ments, down to the most trifling details—that one must attribute this lack of harmony, for there is not wanting a certain natural taste and talent for architecture, the Sultan showing a marked preference for the modern and even for the new. More than one plan, executed with his own hand, has surprised his architects. He understands their explanations very well, and recognises the correctness of the observations they make, but he never gives way to them, and all ends by things being done as he wants them. He is a very troublesome employer, for he tyrannizes and exasperates them during the entire work. For instance, he never finds their walls strong enough, and has them doubled in thickness, at the risk of making the façade look heavy and of disturbing the interior arrangements.

The mania he has of meddling in everything and extending his annoying

Yildiz

surveillance to the most petty details, is carried to excess, especially of late years. For the smallest building he insists on the construction of a model elaborately studied out, in which all the details are shown with the most conscientious minutiae, so that the building he is putting up is only an exact mathematical enlargement. He counts himself, in advance, the number of bricks which should be used in building, and keeps this model, after having had it signed by the architect on each of the sides representing the façades of the edifice, in order to be able to see later if his orders have been strictly carried out. These safety measures seem necessary to the Sultan, but we must confess that their precise significance escapes us.

The Yildiz estate is surrounded by an immense inclosure wall, which, in 1898,

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the Sultan had rebuilt at places and raised thirty feet higher, to render scaling impossible. Close to this wall, and at intervals, are a large number of sentry boxes, and barracks in which are lodged companies of the Imperial Guard, the best-cared-for soldiery in the Empire, and whose condition makes a strong contrast with that of the rest of the Ottoman army.

In the northern part of this immense inclosure is the Sultan's private residence, and that of his sons, and his Harem, the whole forming a group of buildings shut in by a second interior wall, twelve feet thick, and forming a hexagon. This constitutes what is popularly called the *Small Inclosure of the Palace*, the iron doors of which, opening only on the outside, could not be forced in case of a popular rising or a military mutiny.

All the western part of this hexagon

Yildiz

is taken up by the Harem, which communicates with the Imperial pavilion by means of a gallery, and separated from the residence of the princes by a high wall. Formerly the Sultan lived in the little *Mabçine* in the interior of the Harem, but nowadays care for his safety compels him to isolate himself even from his women.

The Sultan's own residence is a graceful and simple wooden building of the Swiss style of architecture. It contains about twenty-four rooms and is furnished with great luxury, but in exceedingly bad taste.

The earthquake of 1894, during which Abdul-Hamid camped out for some time under a tent, prompted him to have built another little kiosk, containing only eleven rooms, built on an artificial rock of concrete, and the walls of which being of cement, have nothing to fear from fire

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or earthquakes; moreover, iron trellis-work hidden in the thickness of the concrete seem to the prudent Sultan an excellent precaution against projectiles!

This small kiosk, which communicates with the larger one by a hallway, is surrounded by a veranda on which at night the *silahchors* * mount guard, armed to the teeth.

Inside, the hangings and carpets are in silk from the Imperial factory at Hereke, and the marquetry is made with the rarest kinds of woods. The doors, inlaid with mother-of-pearl and ivory, have all complicated locks with hidden springs. It is even said that this kiosk contains a mysterious stairway communicating with a dozen secret rooms forming a regular labyrinth, where at night the Sultan can find a sure shelter, known to him

* Albanian guards.



Yıldız Kiosk.

Yildiz

alone, and to the faithful servitor who sleeps at his door.

Under this little kiosk, Abdul-Hamid has had hollowed out a cave, to which he alone has access, and in which is a safe inclosing his jewels, bonds, and most secret documents.

The Sultan's residence has on one side the theatre, and on the other the Cascade Kiosk, from which is to be had a superb view of the Bosphorus, and where the Padishah, when he has the leisure, loves to come and enjoy his *kief*.*

In front of the kiosk the Sultan had hollowed out a narrow tract of land, which was then filled with water and pompously called "the Lake." On this ornamental water he can indulge in the pastime of rowing without having to go as far as the large pond situated outside the small inclosure of the Palace. The

* The *dolce far niente* of the Orientals.

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lake, which is surrounded by a multitude of artificial cascades, cost an enormous sum, and necessitated embankment works twenty-four feet high. Along the banks there are small landing places like those of the many country seats along the Bosphorus, and in the centre is an islet, near which rock lazily a flotilla of sailing boats and steam and electric launches.

A long corridor, the key of which the Sultan keeps, and which constitutes his picture gallery, starts from his residence and ends at the Merassim Palace, or Palace of the Ceremonies, situated outside the small hexagonal inclosure, and erected for the occupation of Emperor William II. It is three stories high, occupies an area of 4,500 feet, and cost £60,000, or \$300,000, including decoration and furnishing. The Imperial princes now go there to take their music lessons.

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At the entrance to the small inclosure of the Palace the Sultan built last year a pavilion of brick and cement, and with stained-glass windows, in the most exquisite taste. The building covered an area of 1,200 feet, and consisted of eleven rooms. The place was put up, it is said, to please a woman's whim. This miniature palace, which is of the most attractive style of modern architecture, has been maliciously styled the *Petit Trianon*. The Sultan inaugurated it by greeting there recently Baron de Calice, Austrian ambassador to Constantinople. Munir Pasha, the Turkish ambassador to Paris, succeeded in getting himself commissioned to supply the furnishings. The distinguished diplomat, who is also an excellent business man, has already made his master spend more than £80,000 for trumpery decorations that would be more in place in a house of ill-re-

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pute than in the apartments of a sovereign.

Yildiz is an Imperial residence *sui generis*. It is an entire city in itself, containing factories and farms, which are worked only for the accommodation and exclusive use of Abdul-Hamid and his Court. We may mention the *Taamirhané*, or repair shop, a vast model establishment, including a saw-mill, a foundry, a locksmithy, a fitting shop, etc.

Let us mention also a porcelain factory, in which are employed a goodly number of Frenchmen, and an arsenal, which serves at the same time as a museum, and contains very rich collections of Oriental and European arms, antique and modern, firearms for sport or war—Winchesters, Martinis, Mausers, Krupp cannon, quick-firing guns,* Maxims, etc.—

* Although the arsenal of Yildiz possesses quick-firing guns, the Turkish army is not yet supplied with them. It

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piled up there in view of the possibility of the Sultan having to repel an attack. Yildiz also contains a museum, part of which contains the Imperial library, and the other part rich collections of bibelots, miniatures on parchment, porcelains, jewels, and all kinds of *objets d'art*; another museum of natural history, or rather of stuffed animals; an observatory, very well equipped; magnificent baths; and two mosques, one for his Majesty's use and the other, situated at the farthest extremity, reserved for the bodyguard.

The Imperial stables are four in number.

The smallest, isolated in the Sultan's private park, is reserved for the superb thoroughbreds he rides. The three others each contain a hundred saddle and car-

is true that for the past four years they are negotiating with the Krupps for the purchase of eighteen batteries of these guns ; but the negotiations do not seem to have come to anything.

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riage horses. One of the stables is beautifully fitted up and arranged, thanks to the care of ex-Grand Groom General Izzet Pasha. At the present time a fifth stable is in course of construction.

In a private box, situated close to the lake, is luxuriously lodged a magnificent white horse—a present from the Czar.

Adjoining the stables is the riding-school, where the Imperial princes are taught horsemanship. A glazed gallery permits their father to be present sometimes at the lessons. He rode himself rather well formerly, and only a few years ago frequently rode around his immense park on horseback, accompanied by one of his sons, particularly Ahmet-Effendi, the prince who rides best; but during one of these rides an accident happened which resulted in their being stopped. The Sultan, having expressed a wish to visit the porcelain factory, the

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place was evacuated in advance by all the workmen, according to a rule always followed on such occasions. One of the workmen, however, hid himself behind a bush, and as the Sultan approached, started forward suddenly and held out a petition. The Sultan's horse shied at the apparition and almost threw his Imperial rider, who thought the man's movement was an attempt upon his life. He ordered the arrest of the bold petitioner, and the unfortunate man was turned over to Hadji-Hassan Pasha, military commander of Bechiktach fort and secret executioner. He was never seen or heard of again.

The Sultan has a marked predilection for animals, and possesses a fine menagerie at Yildiz, containing wild beasts and many tamed and trained animals. As he walks through the park, gazelles, goats, and wild sheep approach him of

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their own accord and take from his hands fruits and delicacies. On the other hand, he is very fond of ram fights, just as Abdul-Aziz loved cock-fighting.

Magnificent kennels and a dog hospital are also institutions in the park. The best specimens of the most beautiful breeds of the canine race are kept there in luxury, and present a singular contrast with their miserable congenarians in the streets of Constantinople.

Abdul-Hamid carries his hobby for animals sometimes to the extent of allowing it to take precedence of serious State business. In 1882 Mr. Gladstone made an important communication to Mussurus Pasha on the subject of Egypt, which the Turkish ambassador immediately transmitted to Constantinople, demanding a prompt reply. He waited anxiously for three days without the Sultan giving any sign of life. During the

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night of the fourth day he received a cipher message. He breathed freely, thinking that at last he had the long-awaited-for answer, when, to his surprise, he found the despatch only contained an order for some wild sheep which the Sultan wanted for his park!

The sovereign is also very fond of birds, and the Mikado was well inspired in sending him last year a rich and precious collection of the rarest fowl of the Empire of the Rising Sun.

His preferences, above all, are for pigeons and parrots, of which he possesses hundreds of couples. At each step in Yildiz one comes across well-filled aviaries and pigeon houses. But Abdul-Hamid is a Sultan before he is an ornithologist. One day he was in his bedroom, and one of his favourite parrots, perched on the window-sill, suddenly began to scream: "Djafer-Agha! Djafer-

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Agha!" The eunuch Djafer, thinking he heard his master's voice, so well was it imitated, came in obedience to the supposed call, which put the Padishah in such a rage that, seizing the unfortunate bird, he wrung its neck, saying: "In this palace there must be only one voice to command!"

The Sultan is also an expert horticulturist, and has had constructed on his estate vast hot-houses, where grow * plants and flowers of incomparable beauty or precious rarity. He himself plucked in one of them, for the Empress of Germany, during the stay she made at Yildiz, a truly marvellous bouquet, in the centre of which he placed an artificial rose carrying among its petals a large diamond taken from the Imperial Treasury.

* It should be observed, however, that the Sultan does not allow the trees on his estate to grow too tall; and the gardeners of Yildiz frequently proceed to trim them in summer so his Majesty may see to the most distant corners of his park.

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The most beautiful of these hot-houses is that near the Petit Trianon. Its frame was originally in worked iron and bronze, treated in Louis XV style and gilded on the inside, but one day, some one having said to the Sultan that bronze attracts lightning, he at once had the *dangerous* metal removed. A big bronze ball surmounting the roof alone was spared.

Abdul-Hamid had the telephone and the electric light put in his apartments, but has never permitted their use in Constantinople, indispensable as they are in every great capital. He thought that conspiracies would be greatly facilitated by the telephone, that faithful and invisible messenger which defies the closest surveillance.* The ministers then in office encouraged their master in this absurd belief, and went so far as to per-

* For the same reason he has forbidden the use of carrier pigeons.

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suade him that a dynamite cartridge connected with a wire could kill him from a distance! It is also true that their Excellencies had a lively interest in thus dissuading him from procuring the means of summoning them each moment to the Palace, and having them constantly under his thumb, which was a frightful punishment for them during the political crises that frightened the Sultan.

The electric light fills him with the same horror, and if he uses it himself in his apartments he is obstinately opposed to it being put in use in the capital or even in the rest of the Palace. So all applications for concessions in this direction have been pitilessly repelled, notwithstanding the pecuniary inducements promised his Majesty, and the generous *bakchichs* * distributed among his advisers by the unsuccessful applicants.

* Bribes.

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At the present time Constantinople is the only capital still lighted by gas alone, and its inhabitants are condemned to semi-darkness during the entire lifetime of the present Sultan.*

The Péra Palace and Summer Palace hotels, the Banque Ottoman, and the Public Debt buildings, as well as the residence of the Greek philanthropist, M. Stefanovich, at Moda, are the only buildings lighted by electricity, and this was made possible only by smuggling in the necessary dynamos and motors.

The reason for this obstinacy is explained by the fact that Abdul-Hamid is aware of the danger of electric discharges that may result from currents of high pressure produced by the proximity of a number of cables.

* On the other hand, Abdul-Hamid has authorized lighting by electricity at Smyrna and Salonica.

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And any explosion occurring in the city might blow up Yildiz!

He dreads so much a catastrophe of this kind that the mere word dynamo terrifies him by its relation—although a purely etymological one—to the word dynamite, a substance for which he has the most profound horror.

In the ordnance bureau there is an officer of merit named Ali Bey, who, unfortunately for him, has been nicknamed by his comrades *Dynamittchi* (dynamiter) because he has made a deep study of explosives, especially in Germany. This officer has never been advanced a step in the service since he was afflicted with this unlucky name.

The Sultan has a great fear of lightning, but has no faith in the lightning-rod, believing that the latter attracts lightning, and fearing that the electric fluid, instead of docilely following the

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conductor harmlessly down to the ground, will somehow run amuck on the way and come and strike him!

General Abid Pasha, who has since been exiled, placed a lightning-rod on the Clock Tower of Yildiz. He was severely reprimanded for his pains, and compelled to have the "dangerous machine" at once removed.

Abdul-Hamid places the same ban on ærostation, which is another of his *phobias*.

Not only might balloons become in case of necessity unseizable and incorruptible emissaries, but they might play a still more terrible rôle, and, hovering over Yildiz, permit some bold *dynamittchi* to drop the abhorred explosive on the Imperial kiosk.

Last summer a brigade of police, led by his Majesty's officers, pursued a balloon that went up on the other side

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of the Bosphorus. The guilty apparatus was captured, and investigation showed that it was only a very innocent demonstration with which a school professor had illustrated a course of physics.

Backed against the outside face of the high wall surrounding the Sultan's residence are the *dairés*, or offices of the chamberlains, secretaries, masters of ceremonies, head spies, and other functionaries of the Court, hotbeds of intrigue, rapine, and machinations. Further on, in the immense park, you come across numerous kiosks erected by whim of the Sultan without the existence of most of them being justified by any use. Most of the kiosks at Yildiz, as, for instance, the Malta Kiosk, celebrated for having been the place of detention of Sultan Mourad, and where Midhat's famous trial was



Entrance to Yildiz Park, showing the Mosque Hamidié on the right.

Yildiz

held, the Tchadir Kiosk, and many others often serve as prisons to persons who, accused of more or less serious crimes by spies, are, on the Sultan's order, examined at Yildiz by chamberlains or secretaries, who act as inquisitors rather than as examining magistrates. Very frequently Abdul-Hamid is present, but invisible, at these judicial examinations, and he follows the course of the examination himself, hidden behind a curtain. Usually, during these examinations, the defendants are "put to the question," as it is done in the State prisons or in the dungeons of the barracks at Tach-Kich-la.* And the tortures, by means of which they extort alleged confessions or

* A sinister reputation attaches to these barracks, situated at Yildiz, owing to the dramas enacted there. An extraordinary council of war sits there under the presidency of a soldier unworthy of his uniform—Rechid Pasha—who judges in most arbitrary fashion, without appeal and behind closed doors, all young soldiers suspected of liberalism.

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denunciations of accomplices, are of the most odious cruelty.

There are some that are novel, as, for instance, that invented and recommended to the Yildiz executioners by *Kiathane Imamy*, the Sultan's buffoon, which consisted in putting gradual pressure on the sensitive parts of the body, and which has the advantage of causing horrible suffering, yet rarely proving fatal; however, several prisoners subjected to it, unable to stand the pain, expired in the executioner's hands. Another punishment, also new and more atrociously refined, consists in the application of eggs, boiling hot, under the armpits. There is no agony more intense, it is said, and the suffering it causes upsets one's constitution so profoundly and wrecks so utterly the nervous system that the unfortunates condemned to submit to it are soon seized with madness.

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It was to this torture, they say, that was subjected the eunuch Mouzaffer Agha, exiled last year to Mecca on the ridiculous charge of having divulged Yildiz secrets to the British embassy. Deprivation of sleep is also a punishment often inflicted by Marshal Zekki Pasha at the Military School, and it often occurs that the unfortunate cadets punished in this way become mad.

We might enlarge on this subject and enumerate a hundred other barbarities of which Yildiz is the theatre. We will confine ourselves, however, to the statement that every torture, the most classical and the newest, the most brutal as well as the most refined and "scientifically Chinese," is affectionately cultivated in this garden of punishments.

Executions are comparatively rare there. A few insignificant prisoners, women and eunuchs, are certainly put to

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death as occasion arises, within the very walls of the Imperial kiosk; but the majority of executions take place outside the Palace only, and most often in distant provinces, where the doomed men are first exiled.

It is rare that the Sultan formally orders the death of any one. Sure of being understood by a hint, his capital sentences are almost always delivered in ambiguous and hypocritical language. A phrase very moderate in tone, expressing a vague desire like this, "I do not want to have this individual in my Empire," is considered clear enough by the zealous executors of the master's secret wishes.

For certain troublesome personages the method employed is still more discreet, and its simplicity is not lacking a certain grandeur, entirely Oriental. Abdul-Hamid, in addition to the Imperial seal which his Grand Vizier puts at the

Yildiz

bottom of official documents and his private seal which does duty for a signature in his financial transactions, uses still a third, bearing in Turkish the lugubrious name of *Vour muhuru*, which signifies *striking seal*. A paper bearing this terrible sign being handed to some officer at Yildiz, ordered to accompany an exile, has the precise significance of an urgent and irrevocable death decree.

From eight o'clock in the morning the approaches to Yildiz become animated. The secretaries and chamberlains arrive one by one, then the officials attached to the Palace, the innumerable spies, big and little, tradespeople, intriguers, petitioners. Yildiz is the centre of all business and every intrigue. This going and coming continues uninterruptedly until nightfall, and re-commences the next day.

Strange and contradictory as it may

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seem, never has the residence of a monarch been so accessible. Abdul-Hamid, who is invisible to his people, who has put between them and his sacred person insurmountable barriers, insists on the most humble of his subjects being admitted to his Palace. It is certainly not in order to listen to their petitions, grievances, or claims, to all of which he turns a deaf ear. It is only to their denunciations that he listens; he does away with all formalities, all the difficulties of access for spies of good-will who can tell him secrets interesting him, and, taking good care not to frighten their zeal, he encourages them, on the contrary, by giving orders that they be accorded the most open and kindly welcome.

Moreover, the Sultan could not, even if he would, detach materially from the capital this Yildiz, a veritable city in which live, without counting the 7,000

Yildiz

men composing the Imperial Guard, more than 5,000 human beings: the women of his Harem and their suite, the slaves and eunuchs; the princes, his sons, their household and servants; then his chamberlains, aides-de-camp, bodyguards, musicians, gardeners, cooks, grooms, domestics, valets, stable boys, etc. In this number are not counted the numerous workmen—masons, carpenters, etc.—who live outside the Palace.

The monthly salary list of the staff at Yildiz represents a sum of £35,000 Turkish, or about \$160,000.* Daily, the

* The official figures. In reality, the total amount of these monthly salaries is much higher. For instance, the salary of a chamberlain on paper is only £30, £40, or £50 Turkish, while he receives fees amounting to double, triple, or quadruple, according to the services he renders. These sums are paid out of the Sultan's privy purse; but his usual way of rewarding his people is to allow them to create all kinds of illicit revenues. Thus Raghîb Bey, third chamberlain, who was penniless on entering the Sultan's service, possesses to-day a fortune estimated at £2,000,000 Turkish, the product of bribes he has received for advising the Sultan in regard to demands for concessions and privileges.

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Imperial kitchens alone prepare at Yildiz for each meal 1,700 *tarlas* (large dishes containing enough for several persons).

These figures are too eloquent in themselves to call for any comment. Let us add, also, that the Sultan has a yearly grant from the State of £736,000, or about \$3,680,000, and an income of £400,000, or about \$2,000,000, more from his immense estates, making in all a yearly income of nearly £1,200,000, or about \$6,000,000. Nor is this all, for it does not include the interest on capital deposited in different banks abroad. No one knows the exact amount of these foreign investments, but they are approximately estimated at £3,600,000, or about \$18,000,000. The allowances of the princes and princesses, meagre enough and paid irregularly, are deducted from the Sultan's Civil List.

Yildiz

Sometimes the payment of the grant he receives from the State is subjected to more or less delay, but it goes without saying that these arrears are settled before those of the salaries of the unfortunate officials and employees of the Turkish Empire, whom the Minister of Finance leaves more and more frequently in the deepest distress.

For some time the Imperial exchequer has been in such straits, owing to the frightful expenses at Yildiz, that the salaries of the lesser employees of the Palace are paid irregularly, and then only with the greatest difficulty.

Last year these delays almost resulted in serious consequences for the Sultan. The Albanian guards at Yildiz, not receiving their pay, mutinied and proceeded in a body to the ministry of the Civil List, where they made a demonstration. The incident being at once brought to the at-

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tention of the Padishah, his Majesty, alarmed, ordered the minister to appease the rebels at once at any cost. Tearing his hair the minister hastened to the Banque Ottoman, where, with great difficulty, he arranged for a loan which enabled him to avert the threatened peril.

If we say "with great difficulty" it is because, strange as it may seem, his Majesty is said to have much trouble in finding lenders. Abdul-Hamid owes money to a great many people, makes a good many of his tradespeople wait for their money, and at times forgets his debts altogether. A particularly sad and instructive instance is that of the unhappy Serkis Bey, the eminent architect of the Tcheragan Palace. The Sultan, who had commissioned him to undertake several works at Yildiz, continually asked him to lay out himself the sums neces-

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sary while building, promising to reimburse him shortly. All of Serkis Bey's fortune was soon gone, and he was even obliged to raise money on a mortgage on his own property. After having vainly claimed from his Imperial client a sum of £70,000 Turkish which he had paid out for him, the architect became angry and went away to Paris. The Sultan got him to return on the promise of settling with him at once, and orders to this effect were, in fact, given, but they remained a dead letter, so much so that last year the unfortunate Serkis Bey, old and in despair, died of hunger without having succeeded in getting back a penny from his wealthy debtor.

'As we have seen in the days of Rome's decadence the provinces labour solely to nourish their Cæsars, so to-day all the labour of the Turkish Empire and its cap-

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ital is absorbed by the Yildiz of Abdul-Hamid.

As soon as his finances are embarrassed, the Sultan, little anxious to touch his private fortune, lays hands on this or that public administration which by chance or a miracle possesses a reserve fund. If he does not wish to act in so direct a manner he takes the ready cash of the Minister of Finance, and thus compels the latter to make good the loss by drawing upon the other funds of the State. Other similar acts have also provoked much indignation among his subjects. For instance, even the reserve funds of the Orphans' Association and the Civil Pensions Association have not been spared, and, diverted from their proper purposes, have recently taken the road to the Palace. No doubt, too, that the sums raised by public subscription for the widows and orphans of the sol-

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diers who fell in the last Turko-Greek war have been put to the same use, as well as those destined almost seven years ago for the famous Exposition that was to be organized permanently at Chichli, and which will never open!

As can be seen, Abdul-Hamid has inaugurated a financial system of his own, and has very original ideas regarding political economy. He has, moreover, clearly expressed his views on this subject with M. Vambéry, the eminent orientalist, whom he summoned some time ago from Budapest to get him to prepare a course of studies intended for the Ottoman University, the inauguration of which coincided with the twenty-fifth anniversary of his accession.

Discussing last May the course of study proposed, the Padishah energetically opposed the creation of a chair of political economy. M. Vambéry has kind-

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ly repeated this part of the conversation: "I spent," he said the day following his interview with his Majesty, "three hours last evening with the Sultan explaining to him how necessary it was that so important a science should be taught. He refused, and finally exclaimed: 'What! You want one of my subjects to come tomorrow and say to me, "Your financial system is bad! It does not conform to theory!" Do you think I could ever tolerate that?'"

As avaricious with his own money as he is prodigal with the resources of Turkey, Abdul-Hamid sometimes feels the necessity of deceiving the country and throwing dust in its eyes.

Some months ago the Constantinople public were thunderstruck to see the newspapers of the capital exalt in a touching concert of hyperbolic praise the glory of the magnanimous sovereign

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who had sacrificed his own interests to the prosperity of his people!

To support this surprising revelation was a balance sheet showing with the aid of stupendous figures that the Padishah since his accession to the throne, of his own accord, had taken from his Civil List the colossal sum of £11,000,000 Turkish and given them to the State.

This semi-official communication, which was so unexpected and appeared to have been only given out to the press after modest hesitation, scandalized everybody, and seemed all the more clumsy that, far from deceiving the public, it only drew attention to the financial system of the Palace, and showed how any check is impossible in the absence of a regular budget.

Free to be prodigal when he wishes, the Sultan gives liberally, even generously, when his interests and, above all,

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his personal safety demand it. For instance, he gives enormous sums, as presents, and in addition to their salaries, to the spies whose services he values, not as evidence of his gratitude, but to stimulate their zeal and that of their imitators.

On the other hand, when his interests are not directly concerned, when it is only a question of doing good for goodness sake, to assist an unfortunate worthy of help, generosity is succeeded by the coldest indifference. The people of his suite know this perfectly well, and rarely consent to hand to their master the petitions and demands for help they receive from persons in distress.

Recently Hadji-Ali Bey, first chamberlain, when asked to intercede with the Sultan in behalf of an old official who needed help, replied to the old man's son: "My boy, do you know what his Majesty said to me one day when I applied for a

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similar favour? 'I have no money. If I had more than I need I should use it to feed my troops.'”

Corrupt and a corrupter, Abdul-Hamid knows perfectly the character of the sorry personages surrounding him, and the small confidence he can place in their fidelity. So he has taken pains to attach them to his destiny by a tie he can depend upon—self-interest. “Let them rob so long as they serve me,” such is the Imperial device. Thus, the *camarilla* of Yildiz, strong in the support of the all-powerful master, gives itself up to the most brazen pillaging.

Let us add, however, that he does not like to see any one become excessively wealthy, and that he checks suddenly the source of the riches when they reach too high a level. He thinks, not without reason, that large fortunes in his servitors' hands might render them too independ-

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ent, too powerful, and take the edge off their zeal. That is why he usually doles out to them as presents estates, houses, mines, rather than money; for they are gifts that he can always easily take back when those who have received them have in his eyes ceased to merit them.

They say in Russia that during the Crimea war when the malversations committed in the commissariat and transport services in the army of Nicholas I reached unheard-of proportions, that Emperor, after an inquiry establishing the guilt of a crowd of officials, big and little, exclaimed sorrowfully to the heir-apparent, 'Alexander:

“ Alas, my son! There are only two men in Russia who do not rob the State. You and myself!”

Sultan Abdul-Hamid will never dare say as much as that to any one.

CHAPTER V

ABDUL-HAMID AT HOME

THE Sultan is an early riser. He gets up winter and summer between 4.30 and 5 A. M., and, covering himself with an *entari*—a long, flowing, silken robe—proceeds in black leather slippers to his bath-room. A few ablutions in cold water suffice him, and after exercising a little he passes into his study, where he drinks a cup of Turkish coffee, prepared in his presence by his *Cafedji-bachi*,* Ali-Effendi. He then lights the first of the innumerable cigarettes which he will smoke without interruption until he goes to bed, and all of which he has made before him for fear of poison.

* Head coffee-maker.

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After a light meal of eggs and milk, Abdul-Hamid settles down to his usual routine of work, to which he devotes almost all his time—the perusal of the reports sent by his spies from every quarter of the globe, and which are laid out for him on his desk by his confidential eunuch, Djafer-Agha, or his first aide-de-camp, Tcherkess-Mehmet Pasha. He also runs over translations of articles concerning him or the State that have appeared in the foreign press, takes note of instructions to send the agents that he has all over Europe, and suggests measures to be taken to counteract the campaign of the hostile newspapers.

About 10 o'clock he has his breakfast, which usually is very frugal. Then he receives his first secretary, Tahsin Bey, and his chamberlains, listens to their reports, gives them orders, and finally busies himself with the affairs of State,

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instructing his secretary to transmit his orders to the ministers, who are received very rarely by the Sultan.

His secretaries are almost killed with work. All at Yildiz toil until a very late hour, and they take turns in sitting up all night at the Palace so that at any hour one of them may be at his Majesty's call.

These secretaries are, in truth, far less occupied with the affairs of the Empire than with questions concerning the person of the Sultan himself. They receive and transmit denunciations, interrogate suspected persons, meet in council to deliberate upon the case of this or that Young Turk, keep up a regular correspondence with the Ottoman spies abroad, decipher the despatches from his Majesty's secret agents in Paris, London, Geneva, Cairo, etc., all their work finally going into the hands of the Sultan.

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The Sultan is generally credited with being a hard worker. It is true that he devotes almost all his time to work, but the duties of State, strictly speaking, take up only a small part of the time, and that is why, in spite of the master's daily industry, current affairs drag on for months and often years.

From the spring until autumn, in winter also, sometimes, the Sultan takes his siesta stretched out on a reclining chair in a small room of his kiosk, after which he again sets to work for two or three hours. Then, unless there is important business to transact, he takes a walk in his private park. The limits of his promenade becomes narrower every year, so that at the present time the sovereign no longer goes away from his residence, but merely walks around it to exercise his limbs. He is, moreover, accompanied by two or three guards, and preceded by,

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the mulatto Hassan Pasha, who enjoys his almost absolute confidence. The duty of this faithful servant is to keep at a distance every human being who, by some almost inconceivable chance, might find himself on the master's passage.

During his former long promenades in the park, Abdul-Hamid—who, like every Oriental, is fond of coffee—had himself followed by his head coffee-maker, who carried with him a lighted stove and everything necessary to prepare on the spot the small cup of Mocha which the Imperial caprice often demanded.

At that period Abdul-Hamid often rode on horseback. The last few years, for divers reasons of prudence, he has given up riding, as well as rowing on the lake close to his residence.

A pastime of which the Sultan has always been very fond since his early youth, and which he has kept up without

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interruption since his accession to the throne, is shooting. His skill with fire-arms is so great that he has been seen to write his name on a wall twenty-five paces away with bullets, and at this distance hit oranges thrown in the air without missing one.

Sometimes, too, during these moments of leisure the Padishah proceeds to the Harem, where he takes a glass of *raki*,* while a melodious voice sings a slow Oriental romance to him. More often, however, he shuts himself up in his workshop, where he busies himself with clock-making, ceramics, painting, and even chemical analyses, for, cautious monarch that he is, he has taken care to render himself competent to examine any foods or beverages that may be under suspicion. He was an excellent carpenter in his youth, and while he was still a prince

* Oriental brandy, taken as an appetizer.

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he carved all the woodwork of a room in the kiosk at Kiathane, and still points to the cornices and wainscotting with considerable pride.

About 6 o'clock in summer and about 4 o'clock in winter the Imperial dinner is served, the pomp and ceremonial of which forms a marked contrast with the simplicity of the menu.

Owing to the Sultan's peculiar temperament, his meals assume necessarily the importance of a question of State. Abdul-Hamid is very abstemious and very suspicious. Let us say at once that his Majesty's private kitchen has nothing in common with the Palace kitchen. It is in a little cell with barred windows and an iron door, resembling a huge safe, that are elaborated the dishes destined for the mouth of the Commander of the Faithful. There it is that his private *chef* officiates under the vigilant eye of the *Kelardji*.

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bachî,* Osman Bey, one of the most important functionaries of Yildiz, since he holds the health, even the life, of the Padiſah in his hands.

Latterly, they say, the second *Kelardji*, Hussein-Effendi, has replaced Osman Bey, in whom the Sultan has lost confidence, and who only retains his high functions for form's sake.

Those privileged persons who have the *entr e* to Yildiz may see every day about 10 o'clock in the morning and 4 o'clock in the afternoon a curious ceremony. Two men, wearing the *stambouline*,* carry past like a host a small four-legged table three feet long by about half that width. It is covered with a cloth and has on it the Imperial service. Next comes a valet with a large tray filled with the dishes prepared for the Sultan, the whole covered with a black cloth and the

* Controller of the cellars. † A Turkish frock coat.

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ends of which are sealed with the *Kelardji's* seal. Behind marches a domestic carrying the bread basket, and he in turn is followed by a fifth, who grasps religiously a water-bottle inclosed in a red case, and also sealed.

It is stated on good authority that 'Abdul-Hamid has drunk only Kiathane water ever since the day when the gipsy 'Aaftab predicted that he would reign on condition that he would drink no other. When he ascended the throne the Sultan rewarded the gipsy by keeping her near his person and placing her daughter in the Harem.

At the passage of the imposing procession, all those who meet it stop and bow with marks of the greatest respect. The small door of the Sultan's private residence, where lackeys are waiting, opens, and the Imperial menu is received by the *Kelardji*, who breaks the seals be-

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fore his Majesty and presents him with the dishes.

Abdul-Hamid always eats alone, and his meals last only a few minutes. He touches lightly a few dishes, and has the remainder carried to this and that courtier. It goes without saying that the honour of receiving the crumbs from the Imperial table is a most appreciated favour. Sometimes the despot, seized with a sudden suspicion, orders the Keraldji to taste the dish served him under the pretence of convincing him that it is badly cooked, but in reality to reassure himself as to its harmlessness. He also surrounds himself with cats and dogs, to which, from time to time, he gives pieces of meat before touching it himself.

In short, as we have said already, Abdul-Hamid by no means leads the life of a sybarite, not on account of his tempera-

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ment, but for the sake of his health, over which he watches with the greatest care. He suffers a great deal with his stomach, and has to submit to severe dieting. This stomach trouble serves as a pretext for the *petit verre* of brandy and the glass of champagne that the Sultan takes from time to time, although his religion forbids it. He also takes Rickles and Kola as tonics. Before receiving a guest of distinction or an ambassador he has acquired the habit of drinking a glass of punch to give himself colour, desiring to appear fresh and well in the eyes of foreigners.

After dinner Abdul-Hamid resumes the reading of his spies' reports, in the intervals of which, if he is in good humour, he sends for his jester. One of those who knew best how to amuse him was the late *Kiathane Imamy*, Ali-Effendi.

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His master used to throw him into the water, rub black all over his face, and play on him a thousand tricks of this kind. Ali knew better than to complain, knowing well that all these little humiliations were usually followed by presents more or less liberal. Sometimes the pleasantries of the Padishah assumed a grotesque and trivial character absolutely incompatible with the idea that one has usually of the dignity of a sovereign.

But the Sultan, happily, has other distractions that are more refined. He loves the theatre, finding in it a relief from his numerous preoccupations and his perpetual fears, and he is often present at theatrical performances, concerts, cinematograph and phonographic séances which are given in his private theatre at Yildiz. This theatre, which is adjacent to the Imperial kiosk, is a small and insignificant-looking building, and stands on the site

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of an old stable.* He has two troupes—a Turkish troupe for comedy and a European troupe for operettas and operas, composed of artistes of all countries. A curious fact is that in each of them there are only two or three women, and most of the female rôles are played by men dressed as women. Besides these two troupes attached to the Palace, it is almost a rule that foreign artistes passing through Constantinople be invited by the Sultan to give a performance at Yildiz. Usually he confers decorations on the principal actors, and he presents, only more seldom, jewels to celebrated actresses. In spite of this flattering welcome foreign artistes generally carry away an unpleasant memory of the performances they give at Yildiz. Accustomed to auditoriums brilliantly lighted

* The Sultan has recently had drawn up the plans of a new theatre which he intends to erect.

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and filled with an animated and demonstrative audience, that of Yildiz, dark, almost empty, and silent as a tomb, produces an unpleasant effect upon them. Invisible to their eyes, but hidden somewhere at the back of a box, Abdul-Hamid watches the performance without giving a sign of life, and it is only when the curtain falls that a chamberlain comes from the sovereign to pay the artistes a few commonplace compliments.

Few are those permitted (outside the members of the Imperial family) to be present at these performances: one or two princes, a few princesses and ladies of the Palace, accompanied by their eunuchs, two or three courtiers, and sometimes a minister in favour constitute the entire audience. From time to time, but rarely, a foreign ambassador is invited to be present, and this mark of particular attention on the part of the Sultan is al-

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ways much commented upon. Another curious fact is that it is strictly forbidden to the local press to mention a theatrical performance or a concert given at Yildiz. Abdul-Hamid does not wish his people to know that *le roi s'amuse*.

Recently a M. N——, a prestidigitator, was authorized to give a séance at the Palace. The Sultan having asked him what his specialty was, M. N—— replied that it consisted in imitating the principal sovereigns of Europe. He imitated in turn the Czar, the Emperor of Germany, Francis Joseph, and the King of Italy with much talent, but without succeeding in arousing a smile on the face of the Sultan, who suddenly gave an abrupt order for the performance to cease. A few days later the chamberlain Arif Bey had the same man to amuse his guests at an evening party, and the prestidigitator, thinking it would please those

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present, terminated his imitations by making up as Abdul-Hamid. The next day the incident was brought to the ears of his Majesty, who, in great indignation, had the prestidigitator paid a large sum on condition that he at once left Constantinople.

The Sultan, who studied music in his youth, can strum a few airs on the piano, and he is fond of certain pieces, such as *La Traviata*, *Il Trovatore*, and *Faust*. *Stella Confidante* is one of his great favourites. Topical songs please him very much, but he has never been able to understand classic music.

Before leaving the subject of music we may be pardoned for relating a little adventure, somewhat disagreeable for his Majesty, which took place at the Yildiz theatre. A troupe of comedians was rehearsing a vaudeville which that very evening was to perform before the Sul-

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tan. Dussap Pasha, his ex-musical leader, directed the orchestra under the orders of the impresario. Suddenly the latter called for a march of some kind. The only one the orchestra knew was the Marche Hamidié, which they immediately struck up. But unfortunately at this very moment an ass had to make his entry on the stage, and he came on to the solemn strains of the Imperial march amid the ill-suppressed laughter of all present. This incident was maliciously repeated to his Majesty, and the result was the dismissal of poor Dussap Pasha, who was forbidden to ever appear before his sovereign's eyes again.

Abdul-Hamid goes to bed late, as he likes to sleep as little as possible. Night-fall frightens him and darkness terrifies him. So is the miracle of *fiat lux* realized each night in the Palace of the Pa-

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dishah. The smallest rooms and out-of-the-way lobbies of the Palace and the most distant alleys of the immense park are lighted brilliantly from twilight until dawn. If by chance he notices that a lamp has blown out he immediately inquires into the cause of the accident and opens a minute investigation on the subject. Moreover, it is not only on account of its darkness that he fears night, but also on account of its silence, and in order to escape the fright that this causes him he has the Palace orchestra play until a very late hour, or else gives orders that men in his employ march ceaselessly before his room so that the sound of their measured tramp may calm his nerves.

Finally, after having assured himself that all is safe and after closing, himself, the doors of his apartment, of which he keeps the keys on him, Abdul-Hamid goes to bed. Before going to sleep he has his

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foster-brother Ismet Bey, Grand Chief of the Wardrobe, read to him. He is a plain, pale-faced little man, and resembles his master so strikingly that it is whispered he personates his Majesty at the ceremony of Selamlyk when by chance the Sultan is prevented from being present. Sometimes it is to Elias Bey, second officer of his wardrobe, or to Faik Bey, one of his favourite chamberlains, that falls the honour of reading to the sovereign.

Let us add here a few words as to the literary preferences of the Great Turk. Without question the reports made to him daily upon all and everything take the first place in the monarch's interest. During the last few years especially the reading of these works of imagination absorbs all his leisure time. In addition to this special literature, the Sultan, from the beginning of his reign, has shown a marked preference for shop-girl litera-

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ture. Books which deal with rape, assassinations, the abduction of children, substitution of wills, incendiarism, and other deeds of violence excite his interest to the highest degree possible. Kassap, his librarian, was usually charged with the translation of this abundant prose as well as of the contents of the *Police Gazette* of Paris, to which his Majesty subscribes.

Generally speaking, the psychology of crime, celebrated trials, passages of history relating the violent deaths of great personages or of the chiefs of State, rebellions, riots, repressions—in short, all that shows human nature under its most horrible aspect, violence, hatred, cunning, venality, injustice, baseness, cruelty—has always had great charm and interest for the mind of Abdul-Hamid.

Among more serious works of philosophy and politics his Majesty admires *The*

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Principe, by Machiavelli, taking this work of the Florentine historian as his *vade mecum* and guide.

Separated from his reader by a screen, Abdul-Hamid listens in silence from the reclining chair which serves him as a bed, sometimes during the best part of the night, until, overcome by fatigue, he falls asleep—for a short time.

His sleep is restless, uneasy, and he is awakened at the slightest sound. His nervous and highly strung temperament rebels against repose. The Sultan often wakes during the night, and solitude is then unbearable to him. Sometimes, merely in order to be able to talk, he summons a confidential man; at other times, seized with sudden anxiety, he sends for an adviser and holds lengthy council with him. If he wakes with a start, frightened by a nightmare, he sends for some individual, half juggler, half sor-

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cerer—like, for instance, the celebrated Ebul-Huda—and makes him explain the dream that has just been troubling him. Sometimes they suddenly bring him in the middle of the night an urgent report from the Minister of Police or some other important spy, and on these occasions the orders issued by his Majesty are marked by the greatest severity.

Often he suddenly leaves his bed, and going out on one of the terraces sweeps the sea, the near-by mountains, and the vast horizon with a night-glass, as if to make sure for himself that all is quiet and that no enemy is marching unawares on Yildiz, the immense park of which is patrolled by a company of the Imperial Guard all night long.

Such is, in normal times and in its broad lines, the daily existence of Abdul-Hamid. At the first alarming rumour or embarrassing political crisis this relative

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regularity of life, all his usual habits and occupations, are swept away before the threatened storm, and he remains for long periods plunged in thought, his active mind preparing plans against an enemy, or busily engaged conjuring up visions of imaginary danger. He has been known to remain over forty-eight hours without closing an eye when suffering from one of these fits. Such long vigils, together with the tremendous mental and physical strain endured, bring on nervous attacks of great violence. Then he becomes ferocious, and while the paroxysm lasts woe to him who approaches him!

These nervous attacks, which he tries to quiet with ether or valerian, are very frequent. He went through a severe attack only a few months ago, after the sensational flight of his brother-in-law Damad-Mahmoud Pasha and his two sons,

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which once more attracted the attention of all Europe to his régime.

Mahmoud Pasha's attacks on his Imperial brother-in-law in the European papers, the letters full of cruel truths he wrote to him, sent poor Abdul-Hamid into fits of impotent rage that no sedative could calm.

The Padishah takes the greatest precautions to prevent these attacks being known by the general public. This is the case with every illness he has, for he does not like it talked about, and since his accession to the throne has never been *officially* ill, nor even indisposed. It is true that his constitution resists illness and that so far his life has not been in danger, although he is predisposed to phthisis, of which his father and mother died; but good care of himself has removed all danger in that direction. Possessing a smattering of medical knowl-

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edge, he doctors his own ailments, which removes the necessity of letting himself be examined by physicians. Formerly he had great confidence in Mavroyeni Pasha, his head physician, who is now very old and in disgrace.* When he needs medicines Abdul-Hamid has them put up from his own prescriptions by Bekir-Effendi, his head pharmacist.

It is not surprising, when one takes into consideration the life he has led during the twenty-five years he has been on the throne, that Abdul-Hamid, in spite of the care he takes of his health, looks prematurely old and broken. He is extremely feeble, and only keeps up by dint of will-power. His body is so thin that it is little more than a skeleton. After having tried in vain, by every possible means,

* This disgrace dates from the accusation made against Mavroyeni Pasha that he had written secretly the history of Yildiz.

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to increase in weight, and unable to do so, he abstains from everything likely to make him thinner. For instance, although fond of massage and vapour baths, he has given them up, fearing to lose a few ounces more of his weight.

Like all despots, Abdul-Hamid has an atrocious fear of death, and dreads illnesses in general and contagious diseases in particular. He has a superstitious fear of the latter which dates back many years. While still heir-apparent he met one day in his park at Kiathane a gipsy who, at the prince's request, told his fortune, and oddly enough she predicted exactly what has happened since: his rapid accession to the throne, foretelling the tragic circumstances by which it would be attended, as well as a long reign, wars, etc., concluding with the ominous words: "Your death will be caused by an illness coming from outside." Consequently,

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cholera and the plague have no more determined enemy than the Padishah; and if Constantinople of to-day boasts in time of epidemic an almost perfect system of sanitation and advanced colleges for the study of bacteriology, it owes them to the gipsy of Kiathane and the Sultan's credulity.

It is good, therefore, sometimes, for a nation to have a rather timid ruler.

There is no precaution he does not take to guard against possible contagion. Naturally a very clean man, washing himself every five minutes—there are lavabos in every corner of his apartments—and exceedingly particular, the Sultan pays the greatest attention to everything relating to health and antiseptics, and follows the progress of bacteriology with passionate interest. One can not imagine what ridiculous precautions his microbiophobia prompts him to take. We

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will limit ourselves to giving one illustration: All the papers, reports, and documents intended for his Majesty must first pass through a disinfecting stove, and as they are all sent in sealed envelopes, it is by the red spot made by the wax melting while in the stove that they know later in the offices of the secretaries—to whom part of them are sent—those papers which have passed through the hands of the Imperial maniac.

The Sultan's dress is extremely simple and free from any affectation of fashion. He prefers dark colours—dark blue, brown, and black. Tight trousers, a velvet jacket, trimmed with fur like all his garments—for he is extremely sensitive to cold—and a waistcoat of dark-blue cloth with red border, such is usually his house costume.

He often wears over this a *hirka*, a

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kind of Turkish cloak, brown in colour. All his clothes are padded about the neck and shoulders in order to straighten his back and conceal the slight hump with which Allah has afflicted him. During the Selamlyk ceremonial, which he attends wearing a plain cloak with brass buttons—like those of the infantry soldiers—it is common report among his suite that he wears underneath a coat of mail.

His wardrobe is poorly furnished, and he is generous with his old clothes, which he distributes among his favourites or his servants. Trying on clothes is very distasteful to him, for he looks upon it as dangerous. A tailor has never had the honour of proceeding with this operation himself. He is only permitted to see the Sultan from a distance, close enough to see the imperfections in the cut and what is necessary to be done. This is how a

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Frenchman—M. L——, first cutter of one of the Imperial tailors—describes a visit he paid to the Palace: “I entered one of his Majesty’s apartments, and Ismet Bey, the Keeper of the Robes, soon came in and took from my hands the stambouline I had brought to try on, and carried it away into the next room. A few moments later a door opened, and the Sultan appeared, attired in the new garment unfinished and only basted. He walked straight before him, about three or four yards away from me, and having gone the length of the room, he came back and disappeared. The trying on was over. Ismet Bey, his hands crossed on his bosom in a respectful attitude, was present at this strange scene, during which I was supposed to see how the garment fit. You can understand how easy it is to fit any one under such circumstances.”

His Majesty has a very small foot. It

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is also the indispensable Ismet who has to try on the Imperial shoes, made by a Greek shoemaker of Pera. They all have high heels, lined with cork.

Abdul-Hamid, always chilly and almost entirely bald, is never without his fez, which he wears thrust down very low over his eyes. Every now and then he pushes it up on his forehead with a mechanical gesture. This fez, very high and large, is exceedingly ugly in shape, and quite different from that worn by Abdul-Aziz. Although very heavy and unbecoming, it has been adopted by all the Sultan's suite.

We must not leave this subject without adding a word about the Imperial pockets. Abdul-Hamid has many, all deep and queerly arranged according to his own directions to his tailor. They serve him both as archives and arsenals. In addition to putting in them the numer-

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ous reports from spies, which he is accustomed to keep a long time and read several times before filing away, he also carries in them the three revolvers with which he is always armed. Generally speaking, the pocket question, his own as much as those of others, usurp an important place among the anxieties of the suspicious monarch. The discreet folds and mysteriously obscure slits, secret entrances to impenetrable hiding-places, cause him visible uneasiness, and he would gladly forbid his subjects their use dare he decree so tyrannical a law. However, if Turks are allowed to have pockets, it is a crime to put one's hand in them or to unbutton one of one's garments in presence of the Padishah. His chamberlains and secretaries must, therefore, hold out in their hands the documents they bring him. Sadyk Pasha, the former Grand Vizier, was disgraced and

Abdul-Hamid at Home

exiled to Lemnos—a mere coincidence, perhaps—a few days after an unfortunate gesture he made during an interview with his Majesty. The Sultan having asked for a certain paper, the minister plunged his hand into the inside pocket of his stambouline to get it. Abdul-Hamid thought that the gesture was not very graceful, and more especially not very reassuring.

The Sultan watches attentively the few persons he receives in audience, and follows anxiously their slightest change in attitude. He has a horror of a quick gesture, a rapid step, an unexpected movement, and woe to him who unwittingly startles this monomaniac, constantly a prey to the mania of persecution. The habit he has of always carrying firearms renders his timidity dangerous for others, and up to the present time it has

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cost the lives of a large number of innocent beings of both sexes.

We will mention here only the case of one of his gardeners who, working one day in the park of Yildiz, on seeing the Sultan approach unexpectedly rose quickly from a stooping posture to assume a respectful attitude. Abdul-Hamid, startled at his sudden appearance and suspecting some evil motive, at once fired at him. The unfortunate man expired soon after, and as no weapon was found upon him it had to be acknowledged that a blunder had been committed.

Often Abdul-Hamid's sudden terrors, without having these tragic consequences, nevertheless leave a painful and lasting impression on those who have the honour of inspiring them. One day the Sultan was seated between Hassan Pasha, Minister of the Navy, and the late Akef Pasha (then President of the Council of



State banquet hall.



Abdul-Hamid at Home

State). The latter, thinking that a draught from an open window was causing the Sultan discomfort, rose abruptly to shut it. Abdul-Hamid took alarm, and rapidly moved his hand toward a pistol lying near him. Akef Pasha, perceiving the movement, promptly sat down again, and, happily for him, the Sultan's fears were allayed. On another occasion, after an audience accorded to the late Prince de Samos, Adossidès Pasha, as the latter was retiring backward, according to etiquette, from the presence, his heel caught the threshold of the door and he stumbled. The movement which he made to recover his equilibrium alarmed Abdul-Hamid, standing by an opposite entrance, who at once thrust his hand in his pocket for his revolver and sprang behind the shelter of the door.

The distrust of the Padishah excepts nobody, and extends even to his intimate

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friends. One night, having summoned Raghib Bey, his chamberlain, to his bedroom on business, the Sultan ordered him during the interview to light his cigarette for him. Raghib Bey hastened to obey, but just as the latter was bending over the bed with the match asked for, the Sultan, frightened out of his wits, seized his arms and held them tight, it having suddenly occurred to him that his chamberlain might strangle him!

It is owing to this attitude of ever-growing fear and distrust that Abdul-Hamid is narrowing more and more the circle of his intimate friends. Among the persons of his house—we do not speak here of his guards, but of his secretaries and chamberlains, for instance—those to whom he is visible are very limited in number. As to the ministers and dignitaries of the Empire, he now hardly ever receives them.

Abdul-Hamid at Home

However, if he is obliged to grant an audience to some one, he knows how to conceal his uneasiness; and, although ever on his guard, is most affable and courteous. He advances to greet the visitor, gives him a kind smile, offers him cigarettes, and, if he wants to get something out of him, talks to him without stopping, literally deluging him with compliments and honeyed phrases. Likewise, when he wants to hear something that interests him, he knows how to listen without interruption and with every sign of the closest attention.

As to the official solemnities, gala dinners, receptions to ambassadors or illustrious guests, and all ceremonies in general, Abdul-Hamid has never loved them, and only puts up with them because he is compelled to. Before receiving an important personage, a foreign prince or the representative of one of the Powers,

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the Sultan studies carefully beforehand what he will say, and, thanks to this commendable precaution, often surprises his interlocutor by the authoritative manner in which he discusses the most varied subjects.

De omni re scibili et quibusdam aliis!

CHAPTER VI

AN UNWILLING PILGRIM

NONE of the previous Sultans has been so little prodigal of his person as Abdul-Hamid. Abdul-Aziz willingly showed himself to the crowd, and loved to be in close touch with his people. As to Abdul-Medjid, a phrase of his well illustrates his bravery and noble fatalistic spirit. A few days after a serious rebellion by the garrison of the Beylerbey Palace, as he was driving in a carriage to the heights of Top-Hané, he suddenly found himself surrounded by a regiment, at the head of which was Seraskier Riza Pasha.

“What is the meaning of this unusual show of force?” demanded the Padishah, surprised.

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“We are here to guard your Majesty,” was the reply.

“Disperse the troops!” commanded Abdul-Medjid. “If I am to die at the hands of one of my subjects—well, let my destiny be fulfilled!” *

During the first few years of his reign the present Sultan showed himself to his people from time to time. But since the unfortunate ending to the Russo-Turkish war, for which he felt a little guilty, and since his first acts of violence and cruel suppressions, which began about that time, and, above all, since the mad attempt by Ali-Souavi—that audacious partisan of Mourad, who, at the head of a handful of men, forced the gates of Tcheragan Palace, intending to drag forth a

* Another Oriental sovereign, the Shah of Persia, Mouzaffer-Eddin, gave a similar exhibition of fatalism at the time of the recent attack on him in Paris when he exclaimed: “Don’t stay the hand directed by God!” This Mussulman virtue is entirely lacking in Abdul-Hamid.

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dethroned emperor, and was massacred with all his companions—Abdul-Hamid has gradually kept away from the capital. Since then, isolated from the rest of the universe on the heights of Yildiz, defended by thick walls, barracks, and bodyguards, the *voluntary captive*, in spite of the extraordinary precautions with which he is surrounded, supports with difficulty the burden of an existence filled with suspicion and terror.

So some idea can be had of the anguish that seizes his soul when he is obliged once a year to emerge from his retreat and come in close contact with the crowd he fears and to pass through the city he abhors, in order to attend the ceremony of *Hirkai-Cherif*—adoration of the Cloak of the Prophet and other sacred relics.

This grand religious festival is held at Stamboul, at Top-Capou Palace, which is

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situated a considerable way from Yildiz. The distance seems incommensurable to the unhappy Sultan, cruelly haunted as he is by a fixed idea of dangers to which this accursed pilgrimage exposes him. There is not the slightest doubt that he would have done away with it long ago if he had dared touch a time-honoured custom sacred in the eyes of the people. But, thus compelled by tradition, he submits to the ordeal with a terror that he plainly shows long before the 15th day of Ramazan, the day fixed for the ceremony.

Almost in a state of panic owing to the master's apprehensions, his Minister of Police, his courtiers, and his spies endeavour to surpass each other in a show of zeal, and dream of nothing but conspiracies and attacks.

A month in advance all the official and secret police is on foot, and as the fatal day draws closer the precautions are

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doubled. A large number of the houses on the route that the Imperial procession will take are the object of the most minute searches, and their occupants, who are all entered on the police registers, are strictly forbidden to appear at their windows until his Majesty has passed. An order is issued for all gun-makers to close their shops on that day, and, it hardly seems credible, all the pharmacists and druggists are ordered to remove from their shops the inflammable or explosive substances they may have in stock.*

* Here is what the Constantinople correspondent of the London *Times* said regarding this subject on January 6, 1899: "Because of the explosive properties of chlorate potassium the importation of this drug into Turkey was prohibited a few years ago. Yet the druggists and pharmacists have obtained permission to import small quantities for medicinal purposes. This quantity has been strictly limited so that it could not be put to any illegal use by those handling it. But as it is possible that the respective supplies kept on hand by the two hundred and thirty pharmacists and druggists of the capital might be all procured by a regicide, and used in an attempt on the sovereign, on the morning of the ceremony of Hirkai-

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The day of the ceremony, early in the morning, the quarters of Bechiktach, Galata, and Stamboul present unusual animation. Gangs of workmen work feverishly to throw over the streets and bridges—which are always repaved for the occasion—a thick layer of sand; engineers, accompanied by police, make a minute inspection of the sewers, water and gas pipes, and every place that could possibly be mined. The streets are encumbered with troops who are to form a double barrier between the Padishah and his people; but if this human barrier were not there, it would still be difficult, not to say impossible, for Abdul-Hamid's sub-

Cherif, orders were issued to the police to visit all these pharmaceutical establishments and seize the jars containing the chlorate potassium. The raids had all to be made at the same time so recalcitrants could not hide their chlorate. These operations took place yesterday, and thus has been once more conjured the danger always apprehended on the occasion of his Majesty's pilgrimage to Top-Capou."

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jects to catch a glimpse of their sovereign.

Crouching at the back of a victoria—he never rides in a closed carriage, fearing not to be able to get out quick enough in case of accident—the raised hood of which conceals a steel shield between the outside leather and the cloth lining, the Sultan, with his two magnificent horses at full gallop, passes like the wind, surrounded by a living fortress of aides-de-camp and courtiers, who hide him almost completely from the gaze of the crowd. Usually his favourite son, Prince Burhaneddin-Effendi, is seated on his left, and opposite him formerly sat Marshal Ghazi Osman Pasha, the illustrious defender of Plevna, who died last year. The marshal owed this honour less to the affection or favour of his master than to the popularity he himself enjoyed, as in the Sultan's eyes he thus presented a certain guaran-

The Sultan of Turkey

tee of protection and security for his own person.

Woe to the dervish, the humble employee, or bold subject who would dare advance to tend the Sultan a petition or other document. He would instantly disappear and never be seen again.*

Eunuchs and Palace runners, attired in superb costumes, their hands crossed over their bosoms in sign of respect, preceded the Imperial carriage on a run.

* In this relation let us mention one incident that redounds to the Sultan's credit. The occasion is so rare that we can not let it escape. As he was returning to Yildiz from the Dolma-Bagtché Palace, where he had accompanied William II, a stranger suddenly threw into the Imperial carriage a heavy package that fell between the Sultan's feet. One may imagine the mortal terror of the poor monarch during those first few seconds while expecting the explosion of the mysterious projectile. Courageous grooms examined the package and found it was a bundle of rags in the middle of which was a live baby. On its linen was pinned a respectful note in which an indigent father recommended his last-born, who he himself could not support, to the Imperial charity. The Sultan enchanted, doubtless, to be let off so cheap, accepted favourably this unconventional plea, and the child has been brought up at Yildiz at his Majesty's expense.

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The luxury and beauty of the carriages and liveries, the glittering uniforms of the horsemen acting as escort, form a striking contrast with the look of consternation impressed on the face of the unwilling pilgrim. Bent double, his shoulders sloping, his consumptive body buried in the loose folds of a long dark overcoat, his thin face of a pallor that even his rouge can not entirely conceal, his enormous red fez pulled down over his eyes, his long hooked nose, his badly dyed beard, lantern-shaped jaws, and sombre glances, uneasy and fugitive, which his piercing eyes cast ceaselessly around him, the Sultan is that day particularly repellent-looking and of neither imposing nor royal demeanour.

For the last few years even this rapid gallop across the city has been considered too dangerous, and on the advice of his former Minister of Police, Nazin

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Pasha, Abdul-Hamid follows a new itinerary to Top-Capou which avoids crossing the Karakeui bridge. He first goes in the carriage as far as the Dolma-Bagtché Palace, where he embarks on his steam launch Tchrifié, which takes him to the Pointe du Vieux Sérail. The police meantime do not lessen their vigilance in the streets of Galata and on the Karakeui bridge, for no one is supposed to know, nor does know exactly until the moment of his Majesty's departure, which route it will please him to take. The Sultan prefers to leave the public in the dark on this score by making preparations on several routes at once. This prevents the crowd massing in too great numbers on any point that the procession may pass.

As soon as he disembarks at the Pointe du Sérail the Padishah gets into another carriage, which drives rapidly through the *Babi-Houmayoun* gate of the

An Unwilling Pilgrim

Top-Capou Palace, and draws up in front of the *Babi-Seadet* (Gate of Happiness). Here the sovereign alights, and, followed by the high dignitaries and functionaries of the State, proceeds to the sanctuary where the sacred relics are carefully guarded.

Then the ceremony begins.

In the vast hall, in which float rare perfumes from the burning censers, the Sultan raises with his own hands the sumptuous shawls masking the Cloak of the Prophet. During this time choristers and reciters chant sacred texts. Then, at a sign from his Majesty, the Grand Vizier, the Sheik-ul-Islam, and other high functionaries pass one by one before the sovereign. Each receives from his hands a scarf, on which is written a verse from the Koran, and which has just been sanctified by contact with the holy relic.

After the ministers and officials comes

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the turn of the Imperial princes, of the Validé-Sultana, and the ladies of the Harem, who arrived long before his Majesty.

At the close of the ceremony, during the entire time of which the Sultan has not ceased for a moment watching the movements and scrutinizing the faces of those around him—for the fear of an attack does not leave him even in sanctuary—Abdul-Hamid withdraws to the Bagdad pavilion, where he has presents of money distributed to his guards.

Soon afterward, twenty-one guns having announced to the faithful the end of the fifteenth day of Ramazan, the sovereign generally stays at Top-Capou for *iftar*,* and later in the evening returns to Yildiz with the same ceremonial, but with far greater haste than when he came

* Dinner which terminates the day of fasting during the month of Ramazan.



During prayers (Selamlyk).

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—overjoyed to find himself still alive and to think he has another whole year to live in peace before submitting again to the frightful martyrdom.

The personal presence of the Sultan is again obligatory at another public ceremony—which has ended by assuming a private character—the solemnity of *Selamlyk*, celebrated every Friday.

Formerly it took place in the *Bechiktach* mosque, not far from the *Dolma-Bagtché* Palace, as in the time of the Sultans *Abdul-Aziz* and *Mourad*. But since his residence has been removed to *Yildiz*, *Abdul-Hamid*, wishing to shorten this weekly ceremony as much as possible, and at the same time to avoid exposing his person to the crowd, had a new mosque—the *Mosque Hamidié*—built in the immediate neighbourhood of his palace. In this edifice he has displayed

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excellent taste. It would, indeed, be difficult to conceive of anything more graceful and beautiful than this frail white mosque, with its slight minaret soaring like an arrow to the blue sky, and, adorned with dainty stone lace, raising its slender outlines amid marvellous scenery, and having for a background the silvery waters of the Bosphorus shimmering in a rich frame of verdure.

In front of this mosque and inclosed by gilt railings is a vast sanded court, in which each Friday gathers a brilliant assemblage. Facing the court and against the Palace wall are two unpretentious pavilions, modern in style, through the windows of which a privileged public may feast their gaze on the spectacle to be enacted.

About eleven o'clock, to the strains of martial music, bodies of troops, infantry and cavalry both, arrive at Yildiz after

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passing through the principal streets of the capital, and take up positions near the Mosque Hamidié. But the part they play is limited, so to speak, to forming a picturesque background to the scene. Order is really maintained by bodies of marine infantry and troops of the Sultan's own bodyguard, whose barracks are in the immediate neighbourhood of the Palace, and who are selected from the famous turbulent Albanian battalions and the magnificent zouave regiments from Tripoli. These last soldiers, particularly, attract the attention of foreigners. Medium in height, with flashing dark eyes, they are all fine-looking fellows, and appear athletic and graceful as they march past in their picturesque uniform—blue tunic with red borders, baggy red trousers, white gaiters, and green turban.

As soon as the guards have taken up

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their respective positions the scene becomes more and more animated. Long lines of carriages, almost all driven by resplendent *cavass*, bring from the city members of the foreign colonies and the tourists authorized by their respective embassies,* who, after having presented their cards to the chamberlains on duty, take the seats allotted to them in the rooms of the first pavilion. The foreign princes and other illustrious personages passing through Constantinople, as well as the members of the diplomatic body, occupy seats in the luxurious reception

* After the assassination of the King of Italy and the attack on the Shah of Persia in Paris, which coincided with the discovery at Barcelona of a list drawn up by anarchists of the sovereigns condemned to death by them, on which, immediately after the name of Humbert II, came that of Abdul-Hamid, the Sultan, terrified, sent a circular letter to the embassies and foreign legations informing them that henceforth no European visitor would be admitted to Selamlyk without a personal card of introduction signed by his ambassador. Moreover, most severe measures have since been taken to assure the safety of the Turkish sovereign during the ceremony.

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rooms of the grand pavilion, which is situated close to the first. Those foreign spectators who have good legs prefer to stand on the terrace of the first pavilion where their long wait—irksome at times under a broiling sun or in the icy blast, according to the season—is at last well repaid by the magnificent view they enjoy of every detail of the ceremony.

It goes without saying that here, as everywhere else, a number of polyglot spies slip in among the guests and take in every word and gesture. Woe to the enterprising tourist ill-advised enough to point a kodak at the Imperial procession. He would not see the end of the ceremony, and would be subjected to a thousand annoyances. Abdul-Hamid—acting in this as faithful guardian of the sacred law forbidding the reproduction of a Musulman's features—will not consent to sit for a photograph, and even goes to the

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extreme—for the last two years—of forbidding photographers to take views of his capital. Consequently, a snap-shot portrait of the Sultan is exceedingly rare, and the only Abdul-Hamid the European public knows is the portrait taken when he was still prince and twenty-five years younger. Let us add, however, that vanity and prudence really actuate him in this attitude. He has often had himself photographed at Yildiz, but he guards carefully the proofs and plates.

As half-past eleven strikes, the moment for the appearance of the procession has come. The officers of the guard make a final inspection of their men, and the crowd, restrained by the cavalry from approaching the mosque too closely, presses eagerly forward. This crowd is made up chiefly of women of the people, whose *feradjies*, in varied light colours, im-

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part a bright note. Eunuchs with bestial faces, and attired in long black stamboulines, cross the court and proceed to the mosque. Some of them carry in their hands bags containing the slippers that the Sultan may want to wear on his entrance, also money which he sometimes distributes on leaving the mosque, perfumes for censers, etc. Followed by several domestics, an enormous negro, more hideous than the others, crosses the courtyard with a slouching gait. It is his Highness the Grand Eunuch of the Imperial Harem, who bears the official title of *Dar-us-seadet-us-cherifé-aghassy*, or Guardian of the Gates of Felicity.

In past centuries the occult influence of this high functionary was immense. Confidant of all the intrigues of the Seraglio, often the only witness of the secret crimes and debauches of the Master, he exercised a power whose effects were felt

The Sultan of Turkey

even in the political acts of the Padi-shah.

His influence has become much less since. Under the present reign it has become, so to speak, nil; but the prestige of his office has remained, and his Highness the Grand Eunuch is still a considerable personage, fully conscious of the importance of his high functions.

On days of grand ceremony—that is to say, when a foreign sovereign or prince is present at Selamlyk—the presence of a few ladies of the Harem is an added attraction to the brilliancy of the picturesque scene. A dozen gala coaches of the Validé-Sultana, the princesses, daughters of the Sultan, or the ladies of their suite, pass slowly by, preceded by the eunuchs and runners in livery, before the troops, who present arms, pass through the gilded gates, and enter the

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court of the mosque, where the horses are immediately unharnessed.

The Sultan's sons arrive separately on horseback and in brilliant uniforms, with their respective suites of aides-de-camp and servitors, and take up their place in front of the diplomatic pavilion. Nothing could be more amusing than to see the youngest of these princes, decked out in generals' or colonels' uniforms, giving themselves military airs, and responding gravely to the respectful salutes of the personages whom they meet.

A few minutes more pass in an impressive and solemn wait. There is not a sound, not a breath. The dazzling mid-day sun is reflected a hundredfold on the gold of the uniforms and the glittering arms of the motionless troops.

Suddenly the *Guidich-Méemourou*,* Hadji Mahmoud-Effendi, gives, with solemn

* Director of the Imperial procession.

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gesture, a signal signifying all is ready. Then one sees appear on the gallery of the minaret the sombre silhouette of the *muezzin*, who in a shrill and plaintive voice calls the crowd to prayer; and, at the same instant, in the midst of a confused tumult, the central door of the Palace opens wide and lets out a gilded flow of pashas, ministers, and high functionaries of the Court, composing the civil and military households of his Majesty, who escort the Imperial carriage. Amid the glittering of the sabres and bayonets rises a formidable clamour, twice repeated, and which drowns the brass instruments playing the Hamidié March: "*Padischahymyz tchok yacha*" (Long life to our Padishah)!

The old Sultans, and formerly Abdul-Hamid himself, went to Selamlyk on horseback, but for the last few years it is in a carriage that he slowly descends the slope leading to the mosque. Facing

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him is seated the Minister for War or the marshal commanding his guard.

The Sultan is dressed the same as on the day of Hirkai-Cherif, but feeling safer and knowing he is the chief point of interest for numerous foreigners of distinction, he looks better here, and responds by an amiable glance or a wave of the hand to the respectful demonstrations of the public in the pavilions. The desire to look well before his guests, to appear full of health, at peace, and affable is one of his constant preoccupations. Behind the Imperial household come grooms and eunuchs, holding by the bridles magnificent Arabian horses, richly harnessed. The brilliant procession crosses the grand court to the strains of the Hamidié March, and stops before the mosque. His Majesty then gets out of the carriage, goes up the steps of the terrace,

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from which he again bows to the crowd, and disappears inside the sacred edifice.

The Sheik-ul-Islam, the Minister of *Evkif*,* the Ulémas, and the Imans who had preceded him, come to meet him, while a *hademé*,† raising his hand with the gesture of the prophets, pronounces these traditional words: “Padishah! Be not proud. Remember there is a God greater than thou!”—words which are carried off on the wings of the wind.

In the mosque, from the place reserved for him, the Sultan watches the service unseen. He does not take part in the prayer, but instead of saying his *namaz* busies himself in profane manner, giving orders concerning the ceremony, running over the list of the persons present, and sending them the Imperial compliments by his chamberlains.

* Minister of Public Worship.

† Subordinate officer in the Sultan's service.

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This is the reason why the very fact of being often present at Selamlyk is one of the best ways of flattering Abdul-Hamid and of currying his favour.

Toward the close of the religious ceremony a two-seated phaeton, drawn by a pair of superb white horses led by the bridle, is brought up and stationed in front of the entrance to the mosque. This vehicle is used for the Sultan's return, and he usually gets in alone and drives himself.

He no sooner picks up the reins than the thoroughbreds start off at a fast trot, and the crowd of courtiers, generals, pashas, sheiks, and eunuchs dash after him like a pack of hounds, some on foot, others on horseback, elbowing, pushing, and jostling one another, each exerting all his cunning and agility to overtake the Imperial phaeton and, by dint of servile eagerness and *temennahs* attract

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to themselves the attention of the master, who remains impassible and indifferent.

On reaching his Palace his Majesty takes a short rest, gives audience to a few members of the diplomatic corps, and immediately afterward once more sets to work on the hard task he has undertaken—the preservation of his own existence and the disruption of the Empire!

CHAPTER VII

THE IMPERIAL HAREM

POLYGAMY tends more and more to disappear in Turkey, not only owing to the spread of Occidental ideas, but also and more especially on account of its great cost. The rapid and constant increase in the expenses of modern life renders more and more burdensome the enormous outlay necessitated by the maintenance of several women, and in spite of his sensuality the Oriental is drifting rapidly toward monogamy, with which he will soon be compelled to be contented.

Few nowadays are those pashas who, as much by tradition as personal predilection, indulge in the barbarous luxury of a harem.

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It goes without saying that first among these privileged beings we find the Commander of the Faithful, who, in fact, owns a living collection of the most precious specimens of Oriental beauty.

The curiosity aroused by this mysterious word Harem, the fugitive vision it evokes of a fairylike and unknown world, unfortunately is apt to make the European epicure forget all there is cruel and revolting in this wholesale sequestration of young, beautiful, and ardent women, whose charm and freshness and even their lives belong absolutely to one master—a melancholy and deformed old monomaniac.

The closest confinement rendering impossible all communication with the outside world, a humiliating part to play, unquestioning obedience to the most fantastic whims of a feared and detested despot—such are the sad conditions in which

The Imperial Harem

the unfortunates of the Seraglio pass their lives.

The Yildiz Harem is their entire universe. They have been brought there as children; they are guarded there like a wretched and valuable herd of cattle, and they live and die there knowing nothing of the world outside their prison, without the slightest notion of what life really is. This incessant and exasperating surveillance, that shackles them even in their prison, and the enervating, unhealthy atmosphere which they breathe constantly renders them different from other women living in healthier conditions. In the absence of the master whose very name makes them tremble, they are nervous, irritable, capricious, and perverse.

The Harem contingent is recruited almost exclusively among the several varieties of the Circassian race, the most beautiful in the East, but it includes also

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specimens of the Syrian and Roumelian races. Chosen for their precocious grace, the odalisques are almost all bought at a tender age by special agents of the Palace under the orders of the *Yessirdji-Bachi* (Grand Master of the Slaves), Hussein-Effendi. Often, too, the governors of the provinces, displaying a zeal that is disapproved of nowadays by all civilized Turks, abduct beautiful young girls from their parents or purchase them to present them to his Majesty.

The cousins and aunts of the sovereign also exert every effort to find for him rare beauties, and display a friendly rivalry in seeking the pearl most worthy to present to him during the Bairam festival. But it is becoming more and more seldom that Abdul-Hamid accepts these offerings at the hands of his relatives and favourites. For instance, the old-time custom of the Sheik-ul-Islam of sending to the Sultan

The Imperial Harem

on the 27th of Ramazan the most beautiful Circassian girl, the flower of the annual crop of slaves, is no longer in vogue.

When they cross the threshold of the Palace the new recruits admitted to the Imperial Harem must abandon and forget everything—their parents, sisters, friends, and country, which they will never see again, and even their very name, for they will begin their new existence under that which it may please the master they shall bear.

A special training in all the arts of pleasing is given to each newcomer by the *Bach-Kalfa*,* under the surveillance of the *Haznedar Ousta* from one of the *dairés* (princesses' apartments), and under the supreme control of the Validé-Sultana.

* Head slave invested with considerable authority, and whose duties, corresponding with those of Grand Mistress of Ceremonies, comes second in rank in the feminine hierarchy of the Court, immediately after that of the *Haznedar Ousta* (high treasurer).

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This course of instruction is quite special, and is intended solely to develop in the young beauties of the Seraglio every art calculated to please the most blasé senses. Grace in deportment, walk, and gesture, melodious singing, attractive dancing, poetic and picturesque speech, eloquent gentleness of expression—everything, in short, that art can add to the natural charm of woman is taught by Oriental experience to innocent beauty in this Academy of Love.

Generally this special instruction lasts two years, and is terminated by a solemn examination presided over by the Validé-Sultana. Each of her pretty pupils must then be proficient in all the duties they may be called upon to perform—the manner of waiting upon the Sultan and serving him with his favourite beverages. She must be familiar with his preferences, his antipathies, his caprices, and

The Imperial Harem

his manias before she is permitted to consider herself a member of the Harem.

If the young odalisque's education is finished she has only to wait her turn in the Harem until the caprice of her master, in the course of one of his visits, deigns to alight upon her. But she has three hundred companions in the Harem possessing the same beauty, having the same ambition, and among her rivals there are several favourites.

Moreover, it sometimes happens that the Padishah takes a caprice for some slave of the sultanas, his relatives, or of the princesses, his daughters, who reside outside Yildiz and only come there on a visit. One night Abdul-Hamid gave dances and ballets in his Harem, he noticed among the dancers a young slave named Mesté Alem, in the service of the Princess Zekkié, his eldest daughter. The next day two of the Sultan's eunuchs ar-

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rived in haste at the princess's palace and informed her that they came to fetch the girl Mesté Alem, who was to be the object of signal honour. Great was the emotion of the young Circassian girl, who had little dreamed of ever rising to such dignity. Her mistress hastened to make her take the traditional bath, and, surrounded by her slaves, superintended at her toilette herself. Perfumed and adorned with sumptuous ornaments, the bride-elect, thinking she was dreaming, got into a superb carriage and, escorted by eunuchs on horseback, arrived at Yildiz, where immediately the Validé-Sultana summoned her to her presence and gave her the customary instructions. However, notwithstanding the precipitation with which they had brought her to the Palace, it was only on the fourth day that Mesté Alem was ushered into the presence of the Master.

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Whether his caprice had passed or the young girl appeared less beautiful, or that he no longer recognised her under her new attire, his Majesty frowned on seeing her and said in an abrupt and angry tone: "That's not the one; send her away."

Trembling, burning with shame, and hurt to the inmost recesses of her dawning pride, raised one moment so high to fall again so low and in such a brutal manner, the poor girl was taken back to the Princess Zekkié—this time without the slightest ceremony and accompanied only by a horrible old black eunuch. Inconsolable at the outrageous affront to which she had been subjected, she did not suffer long. She became melancholy, pined away, and soon died. Yet Mesté Alem does not count among the victims of Abdul-Hamid.

According to the religious law no Mus-

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sulman may marry more than four legitimate wives (*nikiahly*). In addition to these four wives he may have as many slaves (*djariê*) as his means permit—slaves who share his couch and whose children are as legitimate as those of the wives. The law is the same for the Calipha as for the most humble of his subjects. According to very ancient custom, the Sultan never marries a girl of good family, but selects his four wives only among his slaves.

It should be remarked here that Abdul-Hamid, like all modern Sultans, refrained after ascending the throne from contracting marriage, and the first four women by whom he has had children and who should have been made legitimate have not been so really, although they receive all the honours attached to the dignity of wives.

If it happens that among all his slaves

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the Sultan takes a fancy to one in particular, the latter becomes *gueuzdé* (literally, she who has struck the eye). On leaving the Imperial alcove, the *gueuzdé* is promoted to the rank of *ikbal* (glorified).

If the *ikbal* gives birth to a child she becomes *kadine*, or lady, and takes rank as princess in the Harem. She then occupies a special apartment, and has a numerous suite of slaves and eunuchs attached to her person. But the *kadine* is not yet a wife, and can only become so if a vacancy occurs by the death of one of the first four wives of the Sultan, and if the latter is willing to honour her with the title of *kadine-consort*.

It is natural to suppose that the Sultan, possessing so well-populated a Seraglio, would be the father of a numerous family, but such is not the case. The number of his children is relatively small, actually only thirteen.

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Each kadine, or favourite,* resides in a *dairé*, or private apartment. Each *dairé* forms a regular little court, whose organization, modelled after that of the Sultan, has a corresponding hierarchy and analogous duties. Thus in each *dairé* we see a *haznedar ousta* (head treasurer), a *bachkiatib* (first secretary), a *muhurdar* (keeper of the seals), an *esvabdjî* (first mistress of the robes), etc., and a numerous staff, including eunuchs, *calfas*, housekeepers, and *halaiks* (lower order of slaves); etc. At the head of all this hierarchy and above all the kadines is the Validé-Sultana, who is a sort of feminine reflection of the Sultan. Her powerful authority is respected, feared, and obeyed with the same servility, and she reigns absolutely over the Harem.

* Abdul-Hamid has a dozen favourites, the best known among whom is a beautiful Circassian named Azizié-Hanoum, whose brother, Ishak Bey, is one of the Sultan's aides-de-camp.



Eunuch on guard in the Imperial Harem.

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A kadine may never under any pretext leave the Imperial Seraglio. This is not so in the case of an odalisque or of a mere ikbal who has had no children. The latter may be presented by the Sultan to a favourite or to some great personage, and in this case naturally occupies the first place in the harem of her new master.

Often the Padishah only makes a gift of this kind to get rid of a woman of whom he is tired or whose presence in the Palace seems useless to him; sometimes, however, a more sinister design is hidden under this gracious favour, and the woman thus offered may be sent on a terrible mission to the man of whom she becomes the wife. For instance, the Uléma Seiffeddin-Effendi, one of the men whom the Sultan feared most, received from him a beautiful slave, and soon afterward he died!

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More often still, these women are distributed among the harems of suspected persons and charged with the wretched mission of spying. Turkish husbands are more confidential with their wives than is generally believed, and, far from despising their opinions, acquaint them with their plans, and often seek their advice. Abdul-Hamid takes full advantage of this. If it happens that the woman becomes attached to her new master and does not carry out her instructions, she loses the right to eventually re-enter the Imperial Harem. To be able to return into "The Garden of Felicity" and be in favour there she must render services. This, in the slang of the Harem, is called "getting your passport."

At the time of the Armenian troubles the women spies rendered signal service. It was through them that they learned in high places what Turkish personages

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sympathized with the Armenians against the Sultan. In ordinary times they exercise their talents in this direction even inside the Palace, together with the eunuchs, who are constantly eavesdropping behind curtains and partitions.

Sometimes Abdul-Hamid himself learns what he desires to know. For instance, having noticed one day a young slave who was washing the handkerchiefs of her mistress, a kadine, he took a sudden fancy to her and had her brought to his presence. He promised her the rank of princess on condition that she reveal to him what the ladies of the Harem thought of him. Thus encouraged, the new favourite did not delay in satisfying her master's curiosity and told him that the kadine, her mistress, thought him old and tiresome. Edified, Abdul-Hamid placed the young slave above her mistress, now disgraced, saying: "Thus will

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I act toward all those who have not in their hearts what they have on their lips.”

The Seraglio of the Sultan Medjid was formerly the theatre of indescribable orgies, the women being badly looked after and having no hand to restrain them. His successor, Abdul-Aziz, jealous as a tiger, introduced reform, but the Imperial Harem has never been conducted so strictly, so exclusively, or so respectably, so to speak, as under the present Sultan.

An intrigue in Yildiz at the present time is an impossibility. Imprisoned within a double row of high and thick walls, the women of the Seraglio live in an extraordinary world of their own to which no man, except the Grand Turk, has ever access. But it is not only a feeling of dignity or jealousy that prompts Abdul-Hamid to make his mag-

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nificent gynæceum thus inaccessible, but rather his ever-present fear of conspiracies and plots which might suddenly inflame some Mussulman Judith or Oriental Charlotte Corday among his flock of docile slaves.

Formerly the Sultan was very fond of amusement. He does not disdain to seek pleasure now, but he only gives himself up to it in his moments of leisure when he has no preoccupations, and when the terror of some real or chimerical danger does not haunt his imagination, as, for instance, after the Armenian troubles, when a relative peace was established under the reign of the famous favourite, Izzet Bey. During these rare periods he makes numerous visits to his Harem.

Abdul-Hamid prefers pretty and graceful women to those of regular and striking beauty. In this his taste differs from that of most Orientals, who have

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a predilection for majestic and heavy forms.

The Sultan is feared rather than loved by his odalisques. He is, however, kind and attentive to them when his mind is temporarily free from its usual anxieties and worries, and at such times he has even succeeded in inspiring some of them with feelings of affection.

At times he condescends to enter into conversation with his favourites, with whom he has no difficulty in passing for a man of great brilliancy. They are all densely ignorant women, and the superficial education they have received renders them childishly naïve. He entertains them with the political news and gossip of the day, and tells them anecdotes of foreign Courts, of which he is very fond himself, and this is the only idea of history they possess.

When the Validé-Sultana received in

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her private apartments the Empress of Germany she expected that her visitor would merely kiss her hand respectfully. When the Empress shook hands the Validé appeared greatly annoyed, and after the reception remarked to the women of her suite that the foreign sovereign was "ill-bred." *

This view is perhaps hardly surprising when one considers that these women breathe at the foot of the Imperial throne the intoxicating incense that is burned continually before the master by the brazen toadyism of the most servile of Courts. They have been taught from infancy that the Sultan is the King of Kings, the Shadow of God upon earth, the sole arbiter of the destinies of the world, Master of the Two Continents and the Two Seas, Sovereign of the Orient and the Occident,† and most naturally

* *Edebsiz.*

† Part of the Sultan's titles.

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they look upon the heads of other States as the humble vassals of the Great Lord.

Reading—that is, in the case of those who can read—can not modify their opinions in this regard, for they never see anything else than old Arabian tales or scarce Turkish newspapers from which is carefully eliminated by the severest of censors all that might shock Abdul-Hamid's dutiful subjects.

Dancing in all the forms that it assumes in the Orient is very popular in the Harem, and is the principal mode of amusement—Turkish dances to the accompaniment of timbrels, tambourines, or a chorus of languorous voices; and Circassian, Egyptian, and Arabian dances, among which the Sultan prefers the most modest. The favourites often find amusement in the dancing of their slaves, and

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singing, music, rowing, and, for some, photography and even cycling are among their principal amusements.

Otherwise they spend their time in real childishness, playing with dolls, mechanical and swimming dolls, or they amuse themselves by imitating the cries of animals, the crow of the cock, the buzzing of the fly, the barking of a dog, or else they will smear the faces of their negress attendants with flour, and put them up to all kinds of tricks or excite them to quarrel among themselves—in short, try everything to pass away the time. Lying on divans or silk-covered sofas, squatting on Boukara rugs in careless attitudes that set off the symmetrical lines of their bodies and express eloquently enough the sadness of their empty existence, most of them follow with their eyes the blue spirals formed by the perfumed smoke of their cigarette or

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narghileh, and toy with a hand covered with rings with the amber beads of their *tesbih*.* Others sip sirups, partake of sorbets, munch ice, chew gum, or suck a thousand kinds of sweetmeats. They all love sweetmeats, tobacco, flowers, perfumes, especially musk and violet, of which the Sultan is particularly fond, and which they affect to care for more than any other. They adore Angora cats, parrots, doves; coffee, cards, and suggestive stories. They crave two things, because they are prohibited and because they are women—wine and *raki* (that is likewise made from the grape), which the kindness of a eunuch sometimes procures for them.

The time they can not “kill” they abandon to sadness, and they think unceasingly of their far-distant country,

* A kind of chaplet made solely to amuse the fingers and furnish Oriental idlers with an innocent occupation.

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their forsaken home, the long-lost parents, the gloomy future, the impossible lover, the old master, depressing and ugly.

One may imagine the rivalries and jealousies of all kinds and the complicated intrigues that occur among these idle women, all young, ardent, or ambitious. They form numberless little cliques and groups, each having its secrets, its sympathies, and its hatreds. The different clans wage an incessant and underhand warfare, often giving rise to hand-to-hand combats which necessitate the intervention of the eunuchs and at times are only checked with difficulty. In fact, it needs all the authority of his Highness, Abdul-Gani-Agha, the Grand Eunuch, to enforce discipline in the unfortunate and graceful flock over which he guards, and that he governs with indulgent wisdom.

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The foreigner who, by a miracle, succeeded in entering the Seraglio of the Great Lord without knowing where he was would think at first that he had before his eyes rich European women assembled in a feminine congress of beauty and elegance. In fact, the toilettes of the odalisques, from the point of view of the style and cut, tends more and more to follow the tyrannical fashions of Paris. This evolution, moreover, is almost general in modern harems, and the time is fast approaching when the old and picturesque costume of the Turkish "hannoums" will exist only as a memory. At Yildiz the odalisques wear cotton or cloth dresses, according to the time of year, and the princesses and favourites wear mousseline or silk.

There was a time when each of them attempted to make her gown match in colour the flowing robe worn by the Sul-

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tan. For example, when the Sultan put on a pink robe, all the women wore pink to receive him. But the Master for some reason took offence at this delicate attention, and formally forbade it.

Presumably all the efforts made by his women to please no longer affect him; for instance, indifferent to those artificial charms which enhance even the most perfect beauty, he prohibits the use in the Harem of almond paste, rouges, coloured pencils, and dyes for the hair and eyebrows on the plea of precaution against poison.

As we have said already, the Sultan's wives, the kadines, and the favourites hardly ever leave the Harem, in which they are buried alive. The slaves sometimes go out, accompanied by eunuchs, to do shopping in town. But if the ladies of the Palace can not go out, those of the ministers and courtiers pay frequent

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visits to the Imperial Harem. Their visits are not subject to the rules of the protocol or to complicated formalities. Full dress, however, is obligatory. White dress for unmarried women, black gowns for married women, cloaks with a train, hats of the colour of the *féradjé*, surmounted with an aigrette of brilliants, jewels in the hair, and the face uncovered, for the Calipha, alone among all Mohammedans, has the right to see the face of women uncovered and without the *yachmak*, that diaphanous veil which they are compelled to wear, which blurs the features mysteriously, bathes in an ideal whiteness the freshness of the complexion, and makes sparkle in a magic manner the brilliancy of the two beautiful black eyes.

As may be understood, these visits sometimes result in rapid promotions for the husbands, which are not always due

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to their own merits or to the intervention of the Validé-Sultana.

A foreign lady, who has had the good fortune to enter the Imperial Seraglio, thus describes one of the *dairés*:

“There is a kind of general reception room in the princesses’ apartments. I was there in summer, and a white drugget completely covered the waxed oak floor. Here and there were sofas, upholstered in red and yellow satin, with gold fringe, and arm-chairs and conversational settees were scattered around a lacquer table inlaid with ivory. An Oriental piece of furniture clashed oddly with a console of the purest Louis XV. The walls were covered with pictures, mostly landscapes, and simple frames contained Turkish inscriptions embroidered in gold on black velvet. The painted ceiling represented scenes on the Bosphorus. Concealing the door was a magnificent por-

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tière, on the pink background of which stood out in relief the Imperial *toughra* (the Sultan's monogram), and that was all. There was not the slightest artistic knick-knack, unless one might designate as such a few large articles of Oriental luxury in common use in Turkey."

The Seraglio contains several of these *daïrés*, separated one from the other, but all connecting and arranged in a continuous straight line. Each has its own dining-room, but the princesses and *kadines* prefer to take their meals in their bedrooms or in their *boudoirs*. They frequently invite each other to dinner and pay each other a thousand attentions of this kind. Almost always there are three or four together at meal times. All—ladies, slaves, or *negresses*—have not been able to drop the habit of eating in the Turkish fashion; that is to say, on their knees, or squatting, their legs crossed, in

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front of a sort of very low table, long and narrow, in the middle of which is placed the dish from which they take the pieces with their fingers, disdaining plates and forks, which seem clumsy to them.

It goes without saying, that at the ceremonial banquets—as, for instance, the dinners given in honour of the Khe-divah-Mother—it is different. The ladies then eat in the European style at a high table, laden with a sumptuous service of gold and silver plate. On ordinary days the dishes are served in plain copper plates placed on a large *tavla*, or platter.

The menu of the ladies of the Harem is abundant and varied, and sometimes consists of fifteen courses. The laden trays are placed by the cooks in front of openings in the wall of the Harem, and from there pass into the hands of the

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eunuchs, who bring them into the women's apartments.

Usually after each meal all the pretty mouths and little hands are sponged with rose-water.

Before sitting down to the table it is customary to say in chorus a short prayer to the Lord and Master: "Allah, heap blessings upon our Glorious Padishah!"

As the reader has seen, we are far from the fairylike marvels that our imagination heaped up within the walls of the mysterious Imperial Harem.

The days when the power of the Oriental monarchs was only equalled by their bravery, sensuality, and pomp are happily far remote, and the bric-à-brac of the modern Seraglio is only one of the evident signs of its decadence. But while waiting for its complete disappearance, how many crimes, how many punishments

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and atrocities of another age will the sinister prison of the Yildiz Palace still be the theatre?

And who knows even how much blood and how many tears have already flowed behind the impenetrable barrier of its double walls, and how many innocent victims have been immolated in silence to the fierce distrust of Abdul-Hamid? It is notorious that at the slightest suspicion regarding a woman he sees red, and does not hesitate to strike on the spot.

Youth, beauty, the gentleness of his timid human cattle does not disarm the master's cruelty. Often on mere suspicion his eunuchs receive the order to cause some charming creature to disappear, and her companions are forbidden even to ask after her. They tell the story of two odalisques who had become devotedly attached to each other. One of them, suspected of treason, suddenly dis-

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appeared. Her companion seeing her no longer in the Harem, and not even daring to pronounce her name, faded away, having lost the only being she cared for, and died like a flower deprived of water.

Strangulations, drownings in the Bosphorus, and other punishments, impossible as they may seem in our day, are still practised, and more frequently than is supposed.

A single example will give sufficient idea of the unknown dramas of Yildiz.

One day, the Sultan, having to leave his study for a moment, forgot on his desk one of the miniature revolvers which he is never long without. Returning soon after to the room, he found a little girl twelve years old, a little slave in the Harem, who had wandered by accident into the room, handling curiously the little weapon, thinking doubtless, in her childish innocence, that it was some

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pretty toy. Abdul-Hamid's morbid fancy at once made him think some attempt against his life was intended. Seeing his terrified expression, the child burst into tears, and her emotion convinced the despot that it was a confession of guilt. He had her seized and "questioned," which at the Yildiz means tortured in the most abominable manner. Though they thrust red-hot blades under the poor child's finger-nails they got nothing from her but screams and sobs, and the investigation finally proved that she had nothing to confess. Then only ceased the punishment of the little martyr, whose pitiful story is probably forgotten already in the Imperial Harem.

CHAPTER VIII

PRINCES AND PRINCESSES

THE Turkish law of succession, according to ancient custom, gives the throne to the eldest male relative of the deceased sovereign. For instance, if Abdul-Aziz had had a brother older than Prince Mourad, it would have been the deposed Sultan's brother, and not his nephew, who would have been called to succeed him.

The first Caliphas were chosen by election, while the Ommeïdes and their descendants established the custom of designating their successors themselves. Later, force alone won the throne. Under Er Toghrul they reverted to the old system of giving the Caliphate to the eldest male

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Prince Rechad is now fifty-six years old. Although not endowed with much intelligence nor possessing much education, he is a man of excellent judgment and considerable integrity. He, also, has over his Imperial brother, among other points of superiority, that of knowing thoroughly at least one language—Persian—in which, indeed, he has written verse. Actuated by the best motives, sincerely distressed at the condition of the Empire, he keeps well posted as to events, although his brother, the Padishah, tries to dull his faculties by encouraging in him a certain tendency he shows for drink.

The heir-presumptive is kept carefully in the background, and lives in complete retirement, shut up in an annex to the Dolma-Bagtché Palace, which he leaves very seldom to go and visit his property at Machlak, when he is always followed

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by numerous spies on horseback. Surrounded by the Sultan's agents, waited on by servants in the Padishah's pay who note his slightest word and gesture, this unhappy prince's existence is made wretched by the most tyrannical shackles. Almost absolutely unapproachable, thanks to the barriers raised between him and the rest of the world, only a few privileged persons gain access to him—his physician, tailor, and a few tradespeople. It is through these that we know how his good and generous nature is grieved at his brother's crimes.

It is usually by the intermediary of the women of his harem, who sometimes visit—but very seldom—the women of his brother's harem, that he is able from time to time to send out messages, private in character but in no wise reprehensible. Communications of this kind,



The Sultan's favourite horse.

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nevertheless, resulted in the exile of four families whose wives were suspected of having served as political agents between the prince and certain persons devoted to him.

One may judge of Rechad-Effendi's qualities by the partisans he has won—all men of character and standing, who now stand aloof, but await with patience and resignation the blessed hour when their friend and their country will be delivered.

If the prince does not love his elder brother, the latter, on the other hand, detests him, especially because of his upright, sterling character, intolerant of all meanness and spying, which secured for himself the grateful favour of Abdul-Aziz, his uncle. He sees in Rechad, as in every prince, a competitor impatient to snatch the throne from him; and being, moreover, a victim of a childish

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superstition, he thinks that his younger brother brings him ill luck. For instance, about five years ago, one evening that a few princes, among whom was Rechad-Effendi, were gathered around the Sultan, the latter suddenly felt a pain in one of his fingers. He at once withdrew and complained to a favourite of the unfortunate influence his brother had over him, insisting that some mishap occurred every time he saw him. Another accident about as serious had, indeed, happened on a previous occasion. After that the heir-presumptive was received less often at Yildiz. In fact, his visits to his brother have stopped almost entirely ever since Rechad-Effendi, one evening during a performance at Yildiz, when asked by Abdul-Hamid for his views as to the best system of government, declared in favour of a liberal régime.

Besides Rechad-Effendi, Abdul-Hamid

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has three other brothers. Prince Kema-leddin is fifty years old, not very robust, and inclines to phthisis. He is cunning and fond of intriguing like his Imperial elder brother, who once predicted that he would eventually get the better of Re-chad and seize the throne.

Prince Vahideddin and Prince Suleiman do not call for any special mention. They live apart, each surrounded by spies, and both are kept absolutely in the background. Let us add that Abdul-Hamid leaves all his brothers short of money so that they may find it difficult to take any action prejudicial to his interests, and he also encourages their vices in order to reduce them to a condition of intellectual nullity which renders them still less dangerous.

Noureddin-Effendi, another son of Abdul-Medjid, died some years ago of pulmonary consumption.

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The Sultan has also three sisters. Princess Djemile-Sultana, the eldest, is sixty-four years old. She is the widow of Damad-Mahmoud-Djelaleddin Pasha, the friend and accomplice of Abdul-Hamid, of whose accession he was a strong supporter and who repaid him for his services, first by sending him into exile after Midhat's trial and later, it is charged, by having him assassinated.

Princess Senieh-Sultana, the second sister, is about fifty years old, and the wife of Damad-Mahmoud Pasha, who is now in Egypt with his two sons. She is intelligent, well educated, and still retains traces of beauty that was once remarkable. She is a thorough European in her tastes, and the cause of woman-kind has no warmer champion in Turkey. She is a bold sportswoman and loves hunting, fishing, and shooting, and can ride the most spirited horse. With her

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husband's approval, she used to entertain many foreigners, with whom she discussed brilliantly all the interesting topics of the day. Abdul-Hamid, who suspects her of wanting to join her husband, now keeps her confined at Yildiz.

His youngest sister is Medié-Sultana, who lives in absolute retirement with her second husband, Ferid Pasha.

The Sultan had an elder sister, Fatma-Sultana, who married Nouri Damad Pasha—whom he also had exiled and put to death—and who was famous for her beauty, ferocity, and licentiousness. This Mussulman Messalina, whose orgies were notorious at the time, died insane ten years ago at an advanced age.

Abdul-Hamid, who does not love his brothers, has little affection for his sisters, who, on their part, have the deepest aversion for him. Now let us see what kind of a father he is.

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His eldest son, Prince Selim-Effendi, is legitimately married to one woman only—surprising exception in the Imperial family—whom he adores, and by whom he has a little girl, now twelve years old.

Although a thoroughly good man, a hard worker, and possessed of keen intelligence, Prince Selim, unfortunately, has not been able to turn his abilities to account owing to the state of captivity in which he is practically kept. He is subjected to exasperating surveillance, deprived of all communication, not only with the outside world but with the people of the Palace, and even with his own brothers, and is furnished with a course of reading more apt to dull his intellect than to develop it. “The Prince Imperial must, indeed, have been remarkably well endowed by Nature not to show more the pernicious effects of this system of education,” said recently some one whose func-

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tions in the Palace have brought him in close contact with the prince.

At the present time he still continues his studies with the assistance of a professor, and by dint of perseverance has managed to acquire an education as good, perhaps, as can be had at any of the European colleges.

Prince Selim is more unhappy than any of his brothers, cousins, or uncles. A close prisoner at Yildiz, which now he never leaves, he is the object of his father's special hatred, particularly since his sixteenth year. The Sultan's adviser, Lufti-Agha, that famous servant left him by Mahmoud Nedin Pasha when he died, and a few other favourites raised in the same school, long ago pointed to the danger that lay in Prince Selim's intelligence, and the monarch at once saw in this reserved and timid young man an enemy watching his opportunity to seize

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the throne. A few years ago a scandal over a woman was punished by his being exiled in care of Youssouf-Izeddin, the only one of the princes in whom the Padishah has any confidence. He stayed away six months, at the end of which time he was allowed to return to Yildiz, where he was confined.

His disgrace interrupted his studies for several years. He is still kept in the closest seclusion, and the hatred of his father will cease only with his death.

The severity of this captivity has been increased on several occasions when the Sultan thought he had fresh cause for complaint against his son. One day that the prince's demand for money had met with an abrupt refusal, the young man gave vent to some disrespectful language regarding his father, which, when repeated to the latter, was also followed by punishment. On another occasion, the

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prince's generous intervention on behalf of his maternal uncle, General Kiazim Pasha, exiled to Bagdad, seemed to the despot's morbid imagination convincing proof of the existence of a conspiracy between all his family against him.

Although none were slow to see that any show of attachment to the young prince exasperates the Sultan, some bolder than the rest have attempted to bring about a reconciliation. A guard of the Omer-Agha Palace, one of the Sultan's most trusty followers, lost his master's favour for having urged him to ameliorate in some way the prince's wretched condition.

Youssouf Riza Pasha, one of his ministers, fell one day at Abdul-Hamid's feet and begged him to "forgive his son's indiscretions." The Sultan rejected the plea in very harsh terms.

"It adds to the prince's suffering,"

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added Riza Pasha, "to feel that your Majesty won't forgive him."

"May he suffer long enough to croak," replied literally this extraordinary father, "and may I wash his corpse myself,* put him in his coffin, and bury him!"

The Sultan's other sons are Ahmed-Effendi, aged twenty-six; Abdul-Kader-Effendi, two years younger; Burhaneddin-Effendi and Abdur-Rahim-Effendi, aged respectively fourteen and seven.

Abdul-Hamid has no great affection for these princes except for Ahmed-Effendi, whose stupidity has saved him from his father's hatred.

As to Burhaneddin, he is the Padi-shah's spoiled child, and his brothers are rather jealous of him. He has been care-

* It is the custom of Mussulmans to wash their dead before burying them.



The Sultan's carriage.



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fully educated; he cultivates the arts like all his brothers (one of whom, Ahmed, has some talent as painter), and is fond of music. He is the only one of his sons that the Sultan introduces to foreigners of distinction. The young musician has played more than once before sovereigns and other illustrious guests that have passed through Constantinople, such as Emperor William, the Prince of Montenegro, etc. The Sultan is giving his favourite a naval education under the guidance of Vice-Admiral Hikmet Pasha. Ahmed and Abdul-Kader are studying military tactics under Colonel Rifaat Bey. But it goes without saying that, in spite of these special studies, they will all the same be systematically kept out of the army and the fleet.

The lives of the Imperial princes is very uniform and monotonous. Each lives in his daïré, the eldest with their

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wives and their suite, the youngest in the Seraglio, next to which are the apartments of the princes, but separated by a wall. With the exception of Selim, the Sultan's sons leave the Palace from time to time. One sees sometimes at Pera or at Stamboul Abdul-Kader-Effendi in a carriage, or Burhaneddin-Effendi followed by mounted guards, or more rarely Prince Ahmed galloping with a small suite in the direction of Bebek on the Bosphorus. In the Yildiz Park they amuse themselves cycling, rowing, and swimming.

Their course of reading is determined by their father, as well as the programme of their studies; the European newspapers and all publications of a nature to open their eyes are excluded. Hardly are they allowed to look over the illustrated papers. The princes, therefore, are still totally ignorant of that one

Princes and Princesses

science which generally constitutes the fundamental basis of the education of princes of the blood—history.

Abdul-Hamid's sons, like their father, are well-bred, very polite, and have the manners of perfect gentlemen. They are very respectful toward their professors. When one enters the class-room, his Imperial pupil stands up to receive him. Their lessons, which they take separately, are done in a cottage of the Yildiz Park, outside the small inclosure of the Palace.

The Sultan's eldest daughter,* Princess Zekkié, is twenty-six years old. She is graceful, although rather stout. Her pretty blond hair frames a sympathetic face, with languorous blue eyes and a white and transparent complexion. She is delicate and pious, and has a good and

* He had by his first wife a girl, who died when eight years of age. She was burnt to death while playing with matches in bed.

The Sultan of Turkey

gentle disposition and possesses average intelligence. Abdul-Hamid, who carefully excludes from his family, as from his own suite, every man of any character, married his eldest daughter to General Nouredin Pasha Damad, the son of the celebrated Marshal Ghazi Osman Pasha. Her husband, now a man of thirty, and always rouged and perfumed like a woman, is a being of absolute insignificance.

The princess is generally pointed at as the instigator of a murder committed during the first years of her marriage. This was at the period when Nouredin's infidelities aroused cruel and blind jealousy in this Oriental princess, the victim being a paramour of her husband, a dress-maker of easy virtue named Camélia. It was Gani Bey * who assassinated this unfortunate woman as well as her mother,

* The Sultan's bodyguard, whom it is believed the Padishah had assassinated later.

Princes and Princesses

her domestic, and her dog! But persons who claim to be well informed affirm that Princess Zekkié is innocent of this crime, and that it was her father, the Sultan, who ordered it, wishing to avenge his daughter, and being unable to punish Nouredin without provoking a fearful scandal.

This version is all the more plausible in that another of Nouredin's paramours, an Italian girl whose father was a musician in the Palace, was also assassinated later, and again by Gani Bey. As at the time of the first crime, the police inquiry that was started was speedily closed, and it has always been believed that the Sultan instigated this last murder for other reasons than the girl's relations with Nouredin.

Abdul-Hamid's son-in-law has, indeed, been the cause of many murders done in secret. During the month of May last

The Sultan of Turkey

year, for instance, one of his valets, the Bulgarian Cotso, mysteriously disappeared, and no one sought to know why or how.

Zekkié-Sultana is somewhat of a musician, and loves to surround herself with Christians and foreigners. Of her two sons, the second alone is living. Zekkié is very much attached to her brother Selim, whose fate greatly grieves her. She has proved this in trying to carry out a rather chimerical plan, the realization of which was to insure for her brother the succession to the throne. To accomplish her object she counted on Ghazi Osman Pasha, her father-in-law, and on Abdul-Gani-Agha, the chief of the eunuchs, but nothing ever came of the scheme.

The Sultan's second daughter is Princess Naimé, who is twenty-three. She is

Princes and Princesses

tall and graceful, but rather delicate in health and with a tendency to phthisis. She has a profile like a Roman medal, a face of rare distinction, an aquiline nose, and light-brown hair and eyes. She is proud in disposition, deigns to receive no one, is an ardent feminist, a bad Mussulman, eats ham, drinks wine, and mocks most disrespectfully the practices of her religion. This free-thinking princess, however, leads an irreproachable private life, and adores her only son and her husband, by whom she is tenderly loved. He is General Kemaleddin Pasha Damad, second son of the late Ghazi Osman Pasha. Although of no great personal standing, he is very superior, from the moral point of view, to his elder brother.

This devoted couple live in a splendid palace near that occupied by the unhappy Nouredin-Zekkié household. But, although doubly tied by blood, the two

The Sultan of Turkey

couples see very little of each other, and reciprocally despise each other. Each of the husbands is jealous of his brother, and each of the wives equally so of her sister, although the Sultan, their father, does not favour particularly either of them.

The Sultan's third daughter, Princess Nailé, now eighteen years old and a thin, delicate girl, resembles her sister, but has less distinction and charm. She was betrothed to Ghazi Osman Pasha's third son, Lieutenant Djemal Bey, but the engagement was broken off by tacit consent, no one knows exactly why.

Abdul-Hamid's prettiest daughter is unquestionably Princess Aïché-Sultana, who is only thirteen years old.* She is said to be adorable, and of an ideal type of beauty, which she owes to her mother,

* The Sultan has four other very young daughters who are entirely unknown.

Princes and Princesses

a Circassian who was celebrated in the Great Lord's Seraglio for her personal charms. This young princess's character is not yet fully developed. She is receiving a first-rate education, and resides in her father's Harem, as retired and mysterious as a Salammbô.

The inner life of Abdul-Hamid demonstrates that this egoist—of a ferocious egoism—has no more been able to inspire affection than to feel it for others. In his relatives, as in his subjects, he has inspired only fear and terror, and he will remain for his family as for his people, the Tyrant which he is in the eyes of all humanity—the Red Sultan of history!

THE END

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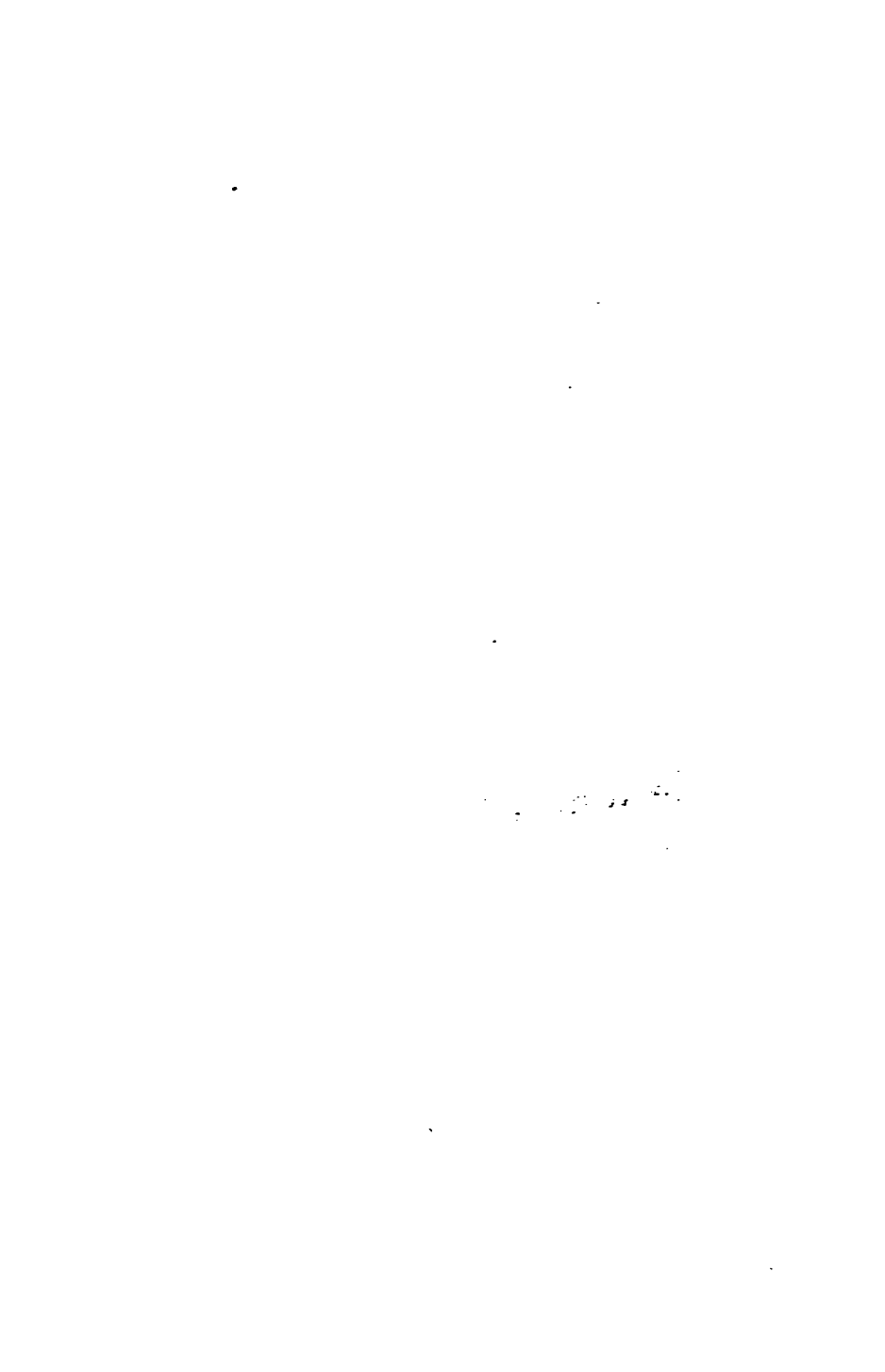
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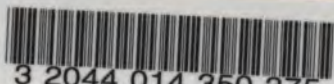
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